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Foreword by

Clayton C. Ruby, B.A., LL.B., LL.M.

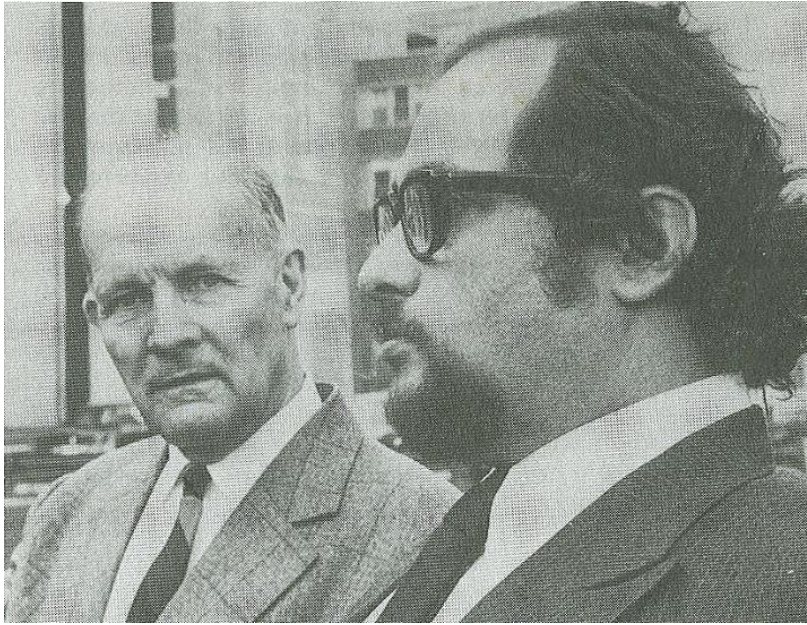
This book makes available to us not only the historical record of a modern attempt at the suppression of freedom of thought, but also gives us important insight into the nature of the ideas sought to be suppressed. It is important that we should know both: not only the actions of our government, but of equal importance, the ideas that our government feared.

The history of the proscription of ideas is not a happy one for those who are the targets of official terror; fortunately, it is an endeavour that invariably faces ultimate defeat. Herewith, then, the sordid account of one small episode in an ongoing struggle.

The fragmentary manner of the exposure of the Security Service activities described in this book has, unfortunately, denied these events the coherent political impact that they should have had at the time. Thus, a short-lived public outcry threatens to settle back into the quiet sense of unease that marks Canada's usual and ordinary response to the R.C.M.P. Security Service.

The "usual and ordinary" is, however, hopelessly inadequate. Curiously, there have been no significant punishments imposed on any of the wrong-doers involved in these or other R.C.M.P. crimes; on the contrary, those most prominently responsible have, in many cases, been promoted to higher positions after being publicly identified with acts shameful to the administration of justice. No, it seems rather that those who presently exercise power in Canada got exactly what they wanted from the Security Service, and accordingly have no intention whatever of acting in any way that might significantly impair the delivery of exactly the same services in the future, should they again be required.

Accordingly, though this book should be read with considerable disquiet, it is important that it be read.



Born in Toronto, Ross DOWSON, (left) in his youth was attracted to the scientific analyses and projections of Marxism. He joined the Workers Party headed by Jack MacDonald and Maurice Spector, part of the world-wide movement identified with Leon Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism.

A steelworker and several times Toronto mayoralty candidate, he became editor of socialist papers and was executive secretary of the League for Socialist Action (LSA) from 1961 until 1972, when he became its chairperson. The LSA, completely supportive of the NDP, was targeted by the RCMP in its Operation Checkmate, designed to harass and if possible destroy organizations of completely legitimate dissent. Dowson is an activist in the St. George, the Rosedale, and the Ward 6 NDP associations.

Harry Kopyto (right) is a practising criminal and civil rights lawyer in Toronto. A prominent activist in the student radicalization of the late 60's and 70's and already a socialist, he decided to enter the legal profession to extend the democratic rights and civil liberties of minority groups and the labor movement. He has represented clients in precedent-setting cases involving women's rights, gay rights and the defence of the trade union movement. A founding member of the Law Union of Ontario, he is an active member of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the New Democratic Party .

Calendar of events

November 1, 1977: Amidst revelations of RCMP crimes across the country, Ontario NDP leader Stephen Lewis asks Attorney-General Roy McMurtry in the Ontario Legislature whether reports that the NDP has been the victim of RCMP harassment are accurate.

December 9, 1977: Attorney-General Roy McMurtry affirms before the Ontario Legislature that the RCMP did have a presence in the New Democratic Party. He releases a statement to the press quoting RCMP officials justifying their interference in the NDP because of alleged infiltration by "ex-communists" and the League for Socialist Action and its "subversive" leadership, upon the invitation of that party's left wing, the Waffle.

December 15, 1977:: A slander suit is launched in the Federal Court against the RCMP by Ross Dowson, a leader of the LSA until 1974, and currently an executive member of the Rosedale NDP, claiming damages for slander in the amount of \$500,000.

January 18, 1978: Dowson releases a brief submitted to the Royal Commission of Inquiry Concerning Certain Activities of the RCMP headed by Judge McDonald and presents a public brief to the Commission's hearings in Toronto.

April, 1978: The Socialist Rights Defence Fund is launched to win public support for the Dowson suit. Among its initial supporters are internationally renowned Noam Chomsky, Jessica Mitford and Linus Pauling, and such notable Canadians as Grace Hartman, Clayton Ruby, Margaret Laurence, etc.

December 20, 1978: The RCMP launches a motion attempting to block the Dowson suit on the basis that the RCMP statement accusing the LSA of subversion was an official communication immune from civil suit.

February 8–9, 1979: RCMP Assistant Commissioner Murray S. Sexsmith, who has figured prominently in the McDonald Commission hearings, refuses to answer hundreds of questions in pre-trial hearings dealing with the attempt to block the Dowson suit. The unanswered questions deal with RCMP criminal acts directed against the NDP and the LSA.

March 9, 1979: RCMP officials admit before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Confidentiality of Health Records in Ontario, presided over by Judge Krever, that they forged, uttered and circulated false documents at an LSA– Young Socialist convention held in Toronto in 1972 and circulated similar letters to members of the LSA. The admission was a reversal of previous RCMP denials and resulted from information brought to the attention of the commission by Dowson.

Toronto civil rights lawyer, Harry Kopyto, representing Ross Dowson, initiates a series of appeals to Attorney–General Roy McMurtry, calling for criminal charges to be laid against the RCMP.

March 28, 1979: Dowson testifies before the Krever Commission defending the League for Socialist Action from charges of violence and subversion.

April 9, 1979: Kopyto appears before Keable Commission officials in Montreal to urge them to investigate letters in French circulated both in Montreal and Toronto of the same general character as the English letters that the RCMP admitted circulating, and to investigate along with other evidence the admission by a Montreal homosexual that the RCMP blackmailed him into infiltrating and spying on the LSA–LSO.

April 17 and June 14, 1979: Dowson makes oral submissions before Judge Krever on the evidence heard by the commission and submits a short policy submission.

September 12, 1979: Kopyto and civil rights lawyer Paul Copeland arrange sessions in Toronto where spokespersons for radical groups and individuals testify about RCMP harassment before attending McDonald Commission investigators.

September 14, 1979: Attorney–General Roy McMurtry finally agrees to set up an OPP investigation of RCMP acts directed against the LSA. Detective Inspector Pelissero of the Ontario Provincial Police heads the investigation.

November 6, 1979: Judge Campbell Grant of the Federal Court hears arguments that the allegations that the LSA was a subversive organization were statements concerning matters of state made by officers of state in the course of their duties and are therefore protected by an absolute privilege. Kopyto contends that absolute privilege applies only when officers of state are carrying out their duties and that the RCMP

issued a charge of subversion against the LSA as part of a cover-up to avoid revealing their own "dirty tricks" directed against the labour movement and the NDP. Judge Grant reserves judgment.

November 22–25, 1979: The delegates to the NDP federal convention held in Toronto adopt a seven-point resolution on Justice, which supports the Dowson suit.

December 27, 1979: Judge Campbell Grant dismisses a major portion of the Dowson suit ruling that the RCMP's statements were made as an extension of parliamentary proceedings and between high officials of government and are thereby privileged and immune from suit. However he permits the suit to continue to trial on the basis of Dowson's allegations that the words complained of were repeated on other occasions. Both the RCMP and Dowson appeal the decision to the Federal Court of Appeal. .

April 20, 1980: The McDonald Commission releases heavily censored hitherto Top Secret testimony by RCMP heads on the force's Operation Checkmate, which along with Operation Oddball and Operation Tent Peg spanned a period from 1969 to December 1973. The operations constituted a clandestine cross-Canada campaign to harass, isolate, neutralize and, if possible, destroy a series of organizations of completely legitimate dissent. One of the cases describes the circulation of forged documents in the LSA, identifying Dowson by name.

April 25, 1980: Dowson and Riddell, another former LSA leader, swear out charges against the two top RCMP officers directing Operation Checkmate before Toronto Justice of the Peace James Allen. Lawyers from the attorney-general's Department ask for an adjournment to permit the OPP to continue its investigation of the RCMP. Lawyers Paul Copeland and Harry Kopyto accuse the OPP of interfering and delaying tactics. Judge Allen adjourns the hearing until June 26th.

June 2, 1980: Kopyto appears before Federal Court Judge Gibson, seeking permission to cross-examine RCMP and government witnesses called before the McDonald Commission about harassment of the LSA. On the appeal of the McDonald Commission's lawyer, J.J. Robinette, Gibson dismisses the application.

June 26, 1980: Lawyers for the attorney-general's Office ask J.P. James Allen for another adjournment of the hearing to determine if there is enough evidence to lay criminal charges against the RCMP. Despite Kopyto's contention that the issue is not whether all the evidence is available — there is good and sufficient evidence now to proceed — Judge Allen adjourns the hearing until September 3, 1980: On September 3 he adjourns the hearing until October 23 and then grants a further postponement until October 30, 1980.

October 30, 1980: Attorney-General Roy McMurtry confronts Judge Allen with an order to stay proceedings. Judge Allen complies, thus blocking the attempt to charge the RCMP of violating the law and also compromising privately initiated prosecutions under his jurisdiction. Lawyers Copeland and Kopyto announce an appeal to a Supreme Court judge for November 26, 1980.

* * *

Interview with Ross Dowson

Background of suit

Q. Would you please give us some background as to how this suit arose?

A. On November 1, 1977, Stephen Lewis, then leader of the New Democratic Party, asked Roy McMurtry, Attorney-General of Ontario, in the Legislature whether the New Democratic Party was under surveillance or subject to investigation by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. McMurtry filed a report in the Ontario Legislature on December 9, 1977 containing a summary of information provided to Mr. R.M. McLeod, acting assistant Deputy Attorney-General of Ontario, who met with RCMP officials in order to obtain the information necessary to respond to Mr. Lewis' inquiries. The statement released by Mr. McMurtry indicated that the RCMP did investigate the New Democratic Party during the period 1971 to 1973. The statement, in summary form, justified RCMP investigation of the NDP and the Waffle on the grounds of the latter organization's alleged invitation to persons, who the RCMP defines as subversive elements, to join the NDP. These persons are further defined as ex-members of the Communist Party of Canada and members of the Canadian Trotskyist movement, specifically naming the League for Socialist Action. This organization represented Trotskyism throughout the sixties and I was a leading member of it until 1974.

The statement slanders the League for Socialist Action by referring to the organization as being subversive and by implying that the League for Socialist Action tended "to promote changes brought on by violent and undemocratic means and thereby attracted the attention of the RCMP in the interest of national security."

The statement states that the leaders of the League for Socialist Action in fact directed their members to join the Waffle group, a left-wing formation in the NDP. It goes on to say that the RCMP investigation of certain members of the Waffle group "established that subversive elements penetrated the NDP through the Waffle in order to gain more respectability, credibility and influence. Although the RCMP investigation concentrated on individuals of security interest, inquiries were broadened sufficiently to put the activities of these individuals in proper perspective. The investigation was de-emphasized after the NDP decided to rid itself of the Waffle. The individuals of concern to the RCMP, having lost the legitimacy of membership in the NDP also lost interest in the Waffle." The statement however emphasized that "the RCMP concern with these individuals was not reduced but any concerns that the RCMP had that these subversive elements were using the Waffle as a means of penetrating the NDP and therefore as a means of acquiring credibility and influence was accordingly eliminated."

Socialism, Communism, Trotskyism, that is, Marxism as an ideology, has long been subject to slander — with Trotskyism in recent weeks being singled out for special attention by such persons as the prime minister and the solicitor-general. On this occasion, in a statement drawn up with the Ontario attorney-general's office and released to the press, the RCMP has named a specific organization and designated its leadership as subversive — that is, as an organization tending to promote changes brought on by violent and undemocratic means. In present-day society, this makes one subject to prosecution under the Criminal Code, not to speak of making all of one's views, no matter what their appearance, suspect of having a sinister aim resulting in ruptures in family relationships, loss of friends, the jeopardizing of employment possibilities, and so on. There is no doubt that such harassment has gravely crippled the free development of the movement to which I and my associates have dedicated our entire lives.

As the leader of the League for Socialist Action for most of its existence and as a leading proponent of Trotskyism in Canada, I feel it is incumbent on me to respond to this slander of Trotskyist ideas as subversive and its organized political expression at that time, the League for Socialist Action, as a subversive organization.

On the advice of counsel, a Notice under the Libel and Slander Act was served on the Federal Government and an action for slander was commenced in the Federal Court of Canada on December 15th, 1977 by myself. I am claiming special damages in the amount of \$50,000 and general punitive and exemplary damages in the amount of \$450,000.

Though punitive and exemplary damages are being claimed in the suit, its main purpose is to establish the legitimacy of socialist and communist views as ideas which may be legally held and promoted in Canada

by lawful means. The RCMP slander is nothing less than an attempt to outlaw socialist currents of thought and provide an excuse and cover for RCMP activities fundamentally directed against the labor movement and its political arm, the New Democratic Party. It is not just myself, all those who were members or sympathizers of the LSA, and ex-Communists, but the Waffle and the New Democratic Party itself which has been slandered by this RCMP interference in its internal affairs.

For this reason, though the suit takes on a personal form in as much as I am the plaintiff, what is really at stake is the right to hold dissenting views and in particular the legitimacy and legality of socialist views. For this reason, this law suit really belongs to the entire left and defends everyone's right to dissent.

Q. What will be the main issue at trial?

A. I have been informed by my lawyer, Harry Kopyto, who is a civil rights practitioner and a member of the NDP like myself, that the court will have to decide whether Trotskyism is subversive as an ideology and, as the League for Socialist Action practised it. Thus, the entire principles and program of revolutionary socialism will be relevant evidence in the trial.

Q. Could you give us some details as to the nature of the legal proceedings?

A. The suit, of course, is framed as an action for slander and it will be heard in the Federal Court of Canada, which I understand has jurisdiction in most suits against the federal government and its agencies. Since the Federal Court Act declares the RCMP to be a servant of the federal government, the suit itself names "Her Majesty the Queen" as the Defendant. I have been advised that this suit can go on trial within a one-year period from the time of its commencement.

Q. How do you plan to conduct the political defence of this case?

A. It is our hope to achieve the widest unity and support for this action through an all-embracing defence committee. We are presently approaching civil rights and radical groups to discuss in detail the basis for co-operation. On top of that, we are going to need considerable financial aid to cover the many costs of conducting such a defence — we are setting up a foundation to which contributions can be sent from.

Forward, Feb. 1978

Submission One to McDonald Commission

Submission by Ross Dowson to the McDonald Commission of Inquiry on January 9, 1978. Dowson subsequently made a second submission which he presented to the public hearing held in Toronto on January 18, 1978.

We would respectfully request that the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the RCMP, call to its Toronto sessions Mr. R.M. McLeod, acting assistant deputy Attorney-General of Ontario, and RCMP officials with whom he met whose statements served as a basis for a summary of RCMP activities in response to questions raised by the leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party, on November 1, 1977.

We are submitting for the Commission's information a statement by the Honourable Roy McMurtry, Attorney-General for Ontario, which he made to the Ontario Legislature and released as information to the public on December 9, 1977. The RCMP officials are unnamed; however, the Ontario attorney-general's office could readily supply them.

We would like the Royal Commission as part of its inquiry to conduct an investigation based on this statement along the following lines, which we understand is within its authority and is indeed in our opinion its obligation to the citizens of Canada:

This statement admits that the RCMP did investigate the New Democratic Party during the period of 1971 to 1973. While Solicitor General The Honourable F. Fox states the RCMP did not conduct "an investigation into the activities of the NDP as such" it investigated the activities of certain members of the Waffle who were members of the NDP at that time and freely associated together in a caucus — a perfectly normal phenomenon in all parties claiming to be democratic.

The RCMP justifies its investigation of the NDP and the Waffle — on the grounds of the latter organization's alleged invitation to persons who it defines as "subversive elements" joining the NDP — persons whom the Solicitor General of Canada The Honourable Francis Fox alleges "would tend to promote changes brought on by violent and undemocratic means." These persons are further defined as ex-members of the Communist Party of Canada and members of the Canadian Trotskyists movements, specifically the leaders of the League for Socialist Action (Trotskyists) who are alleged to have "in fact directed their members to join the Waffle Group" .

This summary poses a whole series of questions of vital concern to all Canadians which must in the interest of civil rights be brought to the fore.

Who determined that adherents of the LSA, and ex-communists, are a threat to national security or are promoters of changes brought on by violent and undemocratic means? On what grounds was this determination made? On what evidence was this determination made? Was this evidence obtained by legal or illegal means? To whom was this information conveyed and for what purposes? What use, if any, was made of this information? The Waffle had publications presenting its views which were widely circulated, and had elected officials. What was the evidence of subversion? What acts were committed by individuals under the name of the LSA or previous names, which are alleged to be subversives? The Trotskyists have a considerable history, a widely circulated public press and a range of public activities including participation in elections, holding public forums of discussion, etc. What evidence was there that the LSA was subversive or the persons who identified themselves with it were, and are, subversive?

The statement says with the end of the Waffle in the NDP that: "The RCMP concern with these individuals was not reduced." Are these persons (either in the NDP or outside of it) still considered subversives? Are they still under surveillance, investigation, and if so, on what grounds and on whose orders?

For Canadians concerned with their civil liberties, this is not a small matter. For the RCMP to designate an organization or individuals as subversive can have wide repercussions on their personal lives, their relations with others — their family, their friends, their associations, acquaintances and their employers — in fact, it can be the central fact in the determination of their whole life.

With no other evidence one is almost compelled to conclude that it is their ideas that are alleged to be subversive — the ideas that they have in common — socialist ideas. A serious probe would determine if in actual fact socialism or communism as an ideology are illegal in the eyes of those who administer and are responsible for the RCMP — if in fact the RCMP and those responsible for it are treating dissenters with such ideas as self-admitted subversives.

The failure of the RCMP to confront those alleged to be subversive with that charge and thereby enable them to defend themselves is a violation of their elementary democratic rights, particularly when these authorities have such power at their disposal which other hearings have shown they have used in the most flagrant violations of the law. What actions can such organizations and persons take who consider that their rights have been violated behind their backs? And what actions can be taken to assure that similar violations do not take place in the future?

How was it and who determined on the basis of these allegations that the NDP should become the arena of the investigations of groups which have their own legal existence? Would not this only serve to compromise the New Democratic Party in the eyes of uninformed opinion? In the course of its investigation of the Waffle, the ex-communists and Trotskyists alleged to have been invited, no less, into the NDP (which is a legal party), how can it be said that the RCMP was not in fact also investigating the NDP "as such". On what grounds and under whose authority did the RCMP decide who would be designated as legitimate members of the New Democratic Party as opposed to those members who joined "through the Waffle in order to gain more respectability"? In the course of its investigations, the RCMP must have had cause to accumulate information on a great many NDPers who identified themselves with the Waffle, including such persons as Mr. David Barrett, who later became Premier of British Columbia. What became of this evidence, and is there not a distinct possibility that even that type of evidence could be used to serve political purposes by those who are made privy to it at a future time? Are other political parties subject to investigation by the RCMP, such as the Liberal Party, which was joined by Hazen Argue (who had headed an earlier Waffle-type caucus at the founding convention of the NDP), a party which many bigots claim even today to be headed by a communist subversive?

It should be clear that all the evidence that served to permit heads of government such as Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Solicitor General Francis Fox to characterize persons as subversive must be made available to those persons in order that they might have an opportunity to respond to such allegations. To permit any other course of action would lay part of the essential underpinnings of a totalitarian police state.

Submission Two to McDonald Commission

Submission to the McDonald Commission of Inquiry concerning certain activities of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police — by Ross Dowson — at sessions held in the Federal Court of Canada in Toronto, January 18, 1978.

Some two weeks ago, on the official deadline, I submitted a written brief to the Ottawa offices of this Commission. At the time of preparing my submission, from reports that had earlier appeared in the Toronto daily press, I had concluded that the public hearings would make it possible, if they were not actually designed to do so, to deal with the key civil liberties issues that have been brought to the fore in the revelations concerning RCMP illegal activities. I thought that the Commission would hear briefs from victimized individuals and organizations which would seem only appropriate to a Commission that is called A Commission of Inquiry Concerning Activities of the RCMP.

Over the past several months the citizens of this country have been witness to RCMP and government officials dealing out, reluctantly, one at a time, bits of information that have affirmed that the RCMP has been violating laws which they are formally committed to uphold and enforce, involving arson, theft of dynamite, purloining of membership lists of a major political party now in government office, and an illegal break-in of a Quebec news service with the purpose of rendering a civil rights organization inoperative, and accumulating stolen material with the intention of planting it in order to cause factional strife in the socialist movement. The most recent is the revelation that RCMPers themselves with the full knowledge and sanction of top RCMP officials, actually issued in the name of the FLQ a call to armed insurrection against the government, which included a denunciation of a prominent FLQ supporter who urged the rejection of terrorism as a method of struggle. At the time of the revelation of this incredible act, which officials assured us was the final one known to them, we were told that there was yet another one, committed elsewhere than Quebec, the details of which could not be released for reasons of so-called national security.

It was in these circumstances that I clearly understood from statements made by Superintendent McKendry that complaints from the public would be heard and investigated by the Commission. I understood that the citizens of this country, particularly those who have been or consider themselves to have been victims of the RCMP's violations of the law would be heard, questioned, and their complaints investigated.

It was on this understanding that my brief requested the Commission to call to these sessions Mr. R.M. McLeod, acting assistant deputy Attorney-General of Ontario, and RCMP officials with whom he met, whose statements served as a basis for a summary of RCMP activities in response to questions raised by the leader of the Ontario NDP as to RCMP investigations of his party on November 1, 1977. I submitted for the Commission's information a statement by the Honourable Roy McMurtry, Attorney-General for Ontario, which he made to the Ontario Legislature and released as information to the public on December 9, 1977 — and suggested that the names of the RCMP officials involved could be obtained from the attorney-general's office. I urged the Commission as part of its inquiries to conduct an investigation today based on this statement along lines that I outlined for their consideration.

It was on the basis of the contents of this statement issued by the Honourable McMurtry that on the 13th of last month, through my lawyer, I served notice to the RCMP and the Federal Department of Justice, pursuant to the provisions of the Libel and Slander Act, RSO 1970, c. 243, that I am claiming special damages in the amount of fifty thousand dollars and general, punitive and exemplary damages in the amount of four hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

However, on Monday, January 14, this Commission caused to appear in the daily press a Notice to the Public which defines the nature of this hearing in a completely unanticipated and novel way.

First, instead of declaring it an enquiry which will hear whatever those appearing before it have to say "concerning certain activities of the RCMP" and in particular their own experiences or the experiences of any organization that they might represent, for questioning, investigation and possible action by the Commission, we are told what the hearing will not entertain.

"This will not be a hearing into allegations of fact which have been made against the members of the RCMP," reads the notice.

As I understand this statement, it means that this hearing here today will not entertain any statements by citizens of Toronto who want to register their complaints to the Committee against members of the RCMP for investigation — which heretofore I had understood to be its essential purpose. Does my submitted written brief, in the opinion of the Committee, constitute allegations of fact against the members of the RCMP? And if the Commission so declares, am I going to be instructed not to present some of its central aspects or expand on them? And should I not wish to comply to such a request will I be prevented from doing so by physical force?

Having defined what the Committee hearing will not be, the Notice to the Public further defines what character any brief to be heard will be. It says that the Committee will hear "briefs as to laws, policies and procedures which should govern the RCMP in its operations generally and in the operation of its Security Service in particular."

This is perplexing. Just as the Commission of Inquiry gets underway — a leading spokesman of the Commission only a matter of days ago predicted that it would have a two to three year life expectancy — citizens appearing before it are asked to present briefs now that would only logically be presented towards the end of the Commission's investigations, which would flow out of a carefully detailed study of these same investigations. After having studied what laws, policies, and procedures actually have governed the

RCMP in its real operations generally, and the real operation of its Security Service in particular, as it has actually been, we would then be best qualified to deal with what it should be.

However, in consideration that the Commission might well seek to enforce the rules that it announced on the very eve of this hearing I will reluctantly leave the substance of my written submission aside hopefully for some future hearing that might permit the public to fully participate in inquiries into RCMP activities.

I will now present a short verbal brief "as to laws, policies and procedures which should govern the RCMP in its operations generally." While astonishingly cynical statements have been made by the Prime Minister about making the laws fit the RCMP's misdeeds I would suggest that the first principle in this respect, the simple and obvious one is that the RCMP should operate within the laws as they now stand and which it has honoured mostly in the breach. RCMP officers who have committed illegal acts and top officials who have ordered them to do so, or who have in any way condoned such acts, should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law and their victims should be as fully compensated as possible.

Even those who with every fibre in their body oppose certain laws as unjust, as upholding narrow interests of a tiny ruling class, impeding social progress, are compelled to work within the framework of the law until such time as they can convince the majority of the need to implement changes that would quite logically be reflected in law. The recent revelations of RCMP illegalities far from showing cause for special privileges or exemptions only confirm the need to enforce the law with regards to the RCMP and above all its Security Service.

Security, national security, has been invoked innumerable times in the course of the investigations of RCMP illegalities both by RCMP officials themselves and leading government figures including the members of this Commission. It is becoming increasingly clear, if there was ever any doubt, that this invocation has nothing at all to do with any clear or present danger to the welfare of the people who reside within the borders of Canada. Rather it is only a miserable subterfuge designed to block any serious investigations of the RCMP and to cover up its illegalities.

The ruse of "national security"

As has been pointed out by others, if such invocations of national security had not been pushed aside by the courts of the United States, Mr. Nixon would still be president, with Ehrlichman, Haldeman and Colson in their positions of power and influence. A turning point in Watergate legal history came when Egil Krogh abandoned the defence of national security justification and pleaded guilty. On January 24, 1974, he told the court the words "national security served to block critical analysis" in his own mind. "Yet what is national security?", he asked. "The discrediting of Dr. Elsberg which today strikes me as repulsive and an inconceivable national security goal, at the time would have appeared a means of blocking the possibility that he would encourage others possessed of classified information... The invocation of national security stopped me from asking the question: 'Is this the right thing to do?'"

Recent evidence before other hearings of this Commission show how this rot has seeped into and come to dominate the thinking and actions of the RCMP hierarchy and even top officials of the government who call themselves democrats.

Chief Superintendent Donald Cobb, conceding the illegal character of a whole series of RCMP operations explained them in the following words: "We were used to living with certain illegalities. They were so commonplace they were no longer thought of as illegal. We no longer see them as illegal but as fundamental." Operating on what he calls a "universal fact" that force was sometimes necessary, he justified among other things psychological terror and physical assault in violation of the law, with the words, "what we have done is relatively banal, compared to what has been done by other intelligence

services" — taking as his point of reference a situation bearing no similarity to the situation in Canada, but one where the rules of war, even civil war apply, in Vietnam, the Middle East and Ireland.

During the brutal aggression against and the slaughter of the Vietnamese people, a U.S. General explained his bombing of hundreds of civilian allies — that it was necessary to kill them to save them from Communism. Mr. Cobb justified the RCMP's illegalities before this Commission with the following words, so strongly reminiscent of the above: "We feel obliged either to betray one's duty to protect the public, or break the law."

The simple fact of the matter is that the RCMP hierarchy has consistently geared its forces, and its forces have been conducting themselves on the basis that dissident views and those who express them, are subversive and illegal — and, particularly since the turn of the century, with the growth of the modern labour movement in this country, that socialist or communist views are subversive and their organizations illegal, and that trade unions and their political party, the NDP, if not in the same boat, are only in a slightly slower boat behind, headed to the same destination, and it is necessary and justifiable to interfere with them in order to frustrate and block this alleged proclivity .

Longstanding illegal operations

Some insight on the problem posed by the RCMP and its illegalities was given in passing by Solicitor General Francis Fox. "Going through the files", he said, "it is very clear that these operations, break-ins, mail openings, have been going on from almost time immemorial within the force."

The problem of the RCMP is rooted in its historic origins and essential structure. Reflecting its origins as a para-military cavalry force mobilized over 100 years ago to end communal ownership of the prairie lands, to crush Indian-Metis resistance to the encroachments of the railway interests and white settlement, to open up the West to capitalist development, the RCMP remains to this day, not a civilian, but essentially a military force. The RCMP hierarchy has been and continued to be drawn almost without exception from the top brass of the Canadian armed forces. These officers over the years have marked themselves out as thorough-going and vicious reactionaries. So crude, so blatantly anti-labor and pro-capitalist are their views that in 1963, Ottawa felt compelled to issue a directive ordering the force to stop making political statements.

Even the revelations that have so far come to light show that the RCMP with its strong bias against the labor and socialist movement is in many respects a political police force directed against the labor and socialist movement.

Over and above the various legal cases that the Native movements have fought against the racist conduct of the RCMP, the statistics on racial composition of the persons who jam the jails in the West show that the RCMP enforces the law with a strong racist bias — "against the Indians and the Métis. So discredited has the RCMP become in Western Native communities that three years ago the Canadian Civil Liberties Association urged the establishment of a new agency independent of the RCMP and government, to investigate citizens' complaints.

Besides urging that the law be enforced with regards to the illegalities of the RCMP, this Commission should urge the launching of a massive corrective educational campaign directed not only to the RCMP but also to the public at large, many sections of which are confused by decades of red-baiting, both official and unofficial. This campaign would make it clear that dissent is not only legal but that it is a completely healthy development, if society is to evolve and be reshaped to meet the ever changing needs and aspirations of its citizens — that ideas such as socialism and communism are not subversive and that organization by socialists to explain and promote their ideas, indeed to win the majority to implement them, is in no way illegal.

The Edmonton Journal recently expressed commiseration for this Commission faced with an apparently unending process of new revelations of RCMP illegalities. It suggested that the McDonald Commission "must already be feeling like Hercules facing the Hydra" — the mythical beast that, as one of its many heads was cut off, brought forth a new and even more terrifying one. This was one of the Labors of Hercules.

I would further the analogy for the Commission to take into consideration in its recommendations by bringing to its attention another of the Labors of Hercules — the cleaning of the Augean stables. Augeus had a herd of 3,000 oxen whose stables had not been cleaned out for some 30 years. In assaying the magnitude of the problem before him Hercules concluded that the situation demanded a truly revolutionary action. Casting all previous conceptions aside he swung the rivers Alpheus and Peneus through the stables and thereby cleaned them within the time allotted to him.

Instead of searching out and weighing various suggested laws, policies, and procedures to govern the RCMP so that its operation, including its Security Service, does not violate the basic democratic rights of the majority of the Canadian people, this Commission should, in my opinion, see this whole matter within the general framework of the crisis that is now confronting the Canadian people and Canadian Confederation itself.

Dismantle the RCMP

The generalized recession of the world capitalist economy and its pressure on the U.S. corporations that dominate the Canadian economy to cut back on their Canadian peripheral operations, further deepening unemployment here, the moves of the Quebec nation which appear certain to result in the establishment of a sovereignty–association relation with the rest of Canada, the land claims and demands of the Native people, and the rising discontent over disparities in the various regions of the country, are challenging the very structure of Confederation itself.

The problem posed to this Commission can only be grasped in the total problem that now confronts Canada. It requires not patchwork or band–aid solutions but a Herculean response. With regards to the RCMP — in my opinion, the Commission should propose that a process be got underway that will result in its actual abolition.

With what shall it be replaced?

I am one of those, a growing number I hope, who believe that the only way to come to grips with the overriding crisis of Confederation is to move boldly and fearlessly towards the preparation for a new constitution for Canada. Among the questions before a popular assembly charged with drafting a new constitution would be the question of the laws that would govern this new Canada and the nature of the forces appropriate to interpret and apply them.

At this juncture and under these circumstances I could only at best make a few tentative suggestions as to how and what laws would be taken over, what would be dropped and added, and what type of body would be necessary to see that they are enforced. One thing would be very clear — it would not be a quasi–military operation, dominated by an authoritarian–minded hierarchy, directed against the labor and socialist movements. It would be a profoundly democratic institution not removed from day to day contact with the people and alienated by rules and regulations designed to serve that purpose, but one in constant touch with the working people and organs of popular administration of this new society.

Probably this Commission will consider that it is not prepared to make any contribution whatsoever to this process. However, its minimum responsibility to the people of Canada is to open its hearings to the

entire truth about the machinations of the RCMP. And whatever else it should recommend, that interventions in the internal affairs of the labor and socialist movements should cease forthwith.

* * *

Situation worse than Watergate

by Ross Dowson

At the height of the sensational U.S. Senate Committee investigation into the Watergate break-in and its White House connection, which made the names Dean, Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Mitchell Canadian household names, many scholarly essays by established sociologists and political scientists appeared in Canadian journals and on editorial pages of the daily press. Largely they were in praise of Canadian social and political structures which we were assured meant there would never be a Canadian Watergate — that it could not happen here.

Ignored was the fundamental nature of the system, the profit driven, class-riven, anarchistic capitalist system that prevails on both sides of the U.S.–Canada border, the domination by the U.S. corporate elite of their junior Canadian counterparts and the economy as a whole, and the permeation of U.S. values through every element of Canadian cultural and political life. Assurances were found in Canada's detached, non-elective judiciary; the stability of the appointed for-life Senate; the elected party-cabinet-responsible prime minister; the constitution in the custody of the British mother of parliamentary democracy, the English monarch as head of the Canadian state. Some possibly even contrasted the highly autonomous, military-disciplined RCMP to the fast-on-the-draw FBI. Such differences between the structures and forms of the U.S. and the Canadian capitalist state apparatus were alleged to favor Canada not having a Watergate.

Watergate started with an incident — a break-in by five burglars of the offices of the Democratic Party National Committee in the Washington hotel on June 17, 1972. Within a span of months it led to a series of revelations that resulted in the resignation of the president of the United States of America — Richard Nixon — the imprisonment of numerous top White House aids and advisors, and the ignominious incarceration of the successor to the long reigning J. Edgar Hoover — Federal Bureau of Investigation head Patrick Gray, along with his acting associate director of the domestic intelligence division.

What is now being widely labelled as Canada's Watergate also commenced to unravel with an incident — an admission by a junior RCMP officer in March 1976 that he "had done worse things" than set off a bomb that he was charged with having done. With that admission, there commenced a series of revelations of RCMP crimes that can hardly be said to take second place to the Watergate revelations, and at the same time a strategy of government cover-up that cannot be said to take second place to that of Nixon and his White House gang.

Ironically the "worse things" that this junior officer confessed to doing under the direction of higher-ups — how high up we do not yet know — were really only getting underway when the U.S. was already at the peak of its traumatic experience. Operation Odd Job — the illegal break-in, entry and theft at the offices of Agence Presse de Libération du Québec (APLQ) and the Movement for the Defence of Quebec Political Prisoners (MDPPQ) took place on October 6–7, 1972, some four months after the Watergate incident. Operation Ham — the illegal break-in, entry and theft of the computerized membership lists and financial and confidential records of the official opposition in the Quebec Legislature, the Parti Québécois — took place January 8–9, 1973, seven months later, as Nixon's cover-up was cracking and then blown in March. It is hard to believe that the directors of these two massive, illegal operations were unaware of the mounting difficulties facing their counterparts and mentors as they plotted the details of their own illegalities.

The actual Watergate break-in was a caper, a petty party shenanigan compared to either Operation Ham or Operation Odd Job, both of which, though known to hundreds of officials right up to the highest levels remained secret for almost four years. Operation Odd Job, possibly to implicate them all, was organized as a joint operation of key RCMP, Montreal and Quebec police forces against the offices of the APLQ and MDPPQ in the heart of downtown Montreal. RCMP participation was authorized by the highest RCMP security official in Quebec, the same who admitted to forging and disseminating to the media, in the name of the FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec) — a call to armed insurrection. The police carted away for detailed examination some 15 file drawers, almost a ton of lists of names and addresses, equipment, documents and pamphlets. The operation's purpose was to demobilize the APLQ and the MDPPQ and at the same time, through a "dirty trick", to set off internal conflicts in left circles.

Patterned on Cointelpro

Patterned on the formula of the FBI's COINTELPRO — a clandestine program of harassments, frame-ups, provocations of various groups and individuals disapproved of by the FBI, which were to lead to the downfall of J. Edgar Hoover's heir — the RCMP dirty tricks were only coming into full flood. Det-Lieut. Gormier of the Montreal (city) police in an appearance before the McDonald Inquiry said that he had forgotten the details of the raid on the APLQ because the police were carrying out 10 raids a week similar to it.

It is hard to conceive of a more calculated, a more massive secret police operation during a period of relative social stability than Operation Ham. This illegal break-in, entry and theft involved five months of meticulous planning, hundreds of constables, the utilization of dozens of highly skilled technical aids from many different trades, two compromising dry runs to split-second timing, including a "disaster plan", in order to get the computer tape, transcribe it and return it five hours later, unknown to its custodians and owners.

As the list of RCMP violations of the law has continued to unravel, the government cover-up has become more desperate. When the question of the responsibility of government ministers for what takes place in their departments was raised, Trudeau counterposed to this the principle of the ministers' right not-to-know and the concept of ministerial non-responsibility. While it first denied RCMP openings of private mail, then was compelled to admit that it had been going on for some 40 years, the government justified it — and even prepared legislation to make it legal. When Ottawa was unable to block the Keable Commission's investigation of RCMP crimes in Quebec, by among other things withholding key documents, in the name of "executive privilege", it finally succeeded in demobilizing it through a ruling of the Supreme Court that violated provincial constitutional rights.

The role of McDonald Commission

Forced to find a substitute for the Keable Commission, the government set up the hand — picked McDonald Commission now going into its second year of public and secret hearings. While the McDonald Commission could not help but add to the RCMP crime sheet and the government's record of cover-up, it has served essentially as a cabinet into which embarrassing matters are continually being filed away — possibly to be dealt with on some more propitious days in the future.

Seldom do the commissioners probe or challenge the testimony given before them. The justifications of the illegalities, no matter how cynical, are infrequently exposed, but rather passively recorded. In many respects the public hearings have even served as a sounding board for RCMP defence of its crimes.

The dispute that recently erupted between the commission, and the legal representatives of the government and the RCMP attached to it, over who would determine what evidence and testimony would be public or remain secret, highlighted above all the secret character of the commission's operations. Even

after Solicitor — General Fox agonizedly revealed Operations Ham and Odd Job as the last and final break-ins by the Security Services, Inspector Cobb made a correction at a McDonald Inquiry session on January 11, 1978. "I have heard of one other operation," he said — this one outside of Quebec. Further testimony was blocked by the RCMP lawyer who declared that even legal arguments about why it should not be made public should be heard in private. After a short adjournment of the public hearing Judge McDonald stated that investigations and hearings on this operation would be heard later, "in camera, if necessary." Nine months later and not a word has been heard of this operation.

The McDonald Commission has not yet opened up hearings on the RCMP's recent period of harassment of the trade union movement — its gathering of information for the employers, its planting of spies and provocateurs in labor's ranks. It also hasn't got around to holding hearings on the three-year-long RCMP investigations of the NDP that involved infiltration, investigations, buggings, and building files on party leaders and activists, that resulted in information on party finances and strategy being made available to cabinet members of its opponent Liberal party. On the basis of inquiries by the Ontario NDP leadership through Attorney-General McMurtry, RCMP authorities admitted to investigating the party, but claimed however, with a straight face, not to have investigated the party as such — just leftwing currents within the party.

"Defending" the Parti Québécois

The operation that seized Parti Québécois membership and financial contributor lists was also, of course, not directed against the PQ as such. The target was alleged to be "suspected terrorist infiltration of the PQ" and against an influx of "FLQ-ists and Marxists" — and so, presumably the operation was in the interests of the PQ itself as the RCMP saw things and accordingly acted. However, the former head of the RCMP security network told the Keable inquiry that the PQ is "subversive, seditious and in some cases treasonable".

In Washington's Watergate, culprits were found, the trail of suspects was pursued, even though it lead right up to the highest elective post in the land, and a semblance of justice was done. Although its repercussions will be felt for decades to come, the system has not only survived and adjusted but it would appear to have even strengthened illusions that it does not need to be replaced by any new kind of system.

If the American system could with some justification be said to have worked, the same cannot be said for the Canadian system, faced with its Watergate. While it will have nothing like the impact on world politics of Washington's Watergate it is certain to have a far reaching effect on the future of Canada, perhaps even more than Washington's Watergate will have on the future of the U.S.

From the very first the Liberal machine and the entire state apparatus swung in behind the RCMP, along with the Tories, and even the NDP parliamentary caucus — although the NDP, the PQ and the organized labor movement are the main targets of the RCMP's massive campaign of illegalities. Central to Canada's Watergate is the preservation of the sacrosanct image of the RCMP, a quasi-military secret political police force that has long operated on the premise that all working class organizations, if not in law, are in actuality subversive, illegal, and fair game for any and every kind of harassment.

While an increasing number of brazen and outrageous violations of civil rights and the law continue to be exposed over a period of almost three years now, there are yet no accused on the dock. And no criminals are being held up to public scorn and contempt. The reason is clear.

We are confronted not with individual acts committed by individuals or even groups of individuals, but by procedures of such a long and established character, for which no commands or orders ever need be uttered, least of all written down, but which flow out of the style, the rooted tradition and the essential class character of Canadian state institutions.

Although specifically excluded by law from OHIP data and Unemployment Insurance Office SIN records, the latter's officials not only gave the RCMP unlimited access from the start but in 1969 gave it a Telex number so it could call directly to a central index computer for information. Back in 1972 National Revenue Department officials, keeping provincial attorneys-general who are responsible for law enforcement in the dark, agreed to RCMP access to income tax information.

The 1974 amendments to the Criminal Code caused the RCMP misgivings because it "took away the internal authority" and gave it to judges. The fears were unfounded. Judges refused only 8 and approved almost 2,000 bugs and wire taps. The number has doubled to a current average of 600 installations a year.

Thus the blowing of the cover-up in Canada's Watergate threatens to expose the total system and the state itself as an instrument of coercion and oppression against the working class.

The fact that there is no culprit such as Nixon, that there are no Mitchells or Grays upon whom individual or even collective guilt can be fastened, is the dilemma that confronts the Trudeau government and the McDonald Commission and its critical supporters.

from Forward, Nov. 1978.

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Query into violations of health records site of RCMP-Socialist confrontation

The Honourable Mr. Justice Horace Krever, head of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Confidentiality of Health Records in Ontario, thanked Ross Dowson following his appearance and testimony before the commission on March 28, 1979.

"I haven't heard such an enlightening discussion of Marxism for perhaps twenty-five, thirty years," he said. "But I particularly want to express my gratitude to you for bringing to our attention, to the attention of the commission, the letters which have been the subject of the hearings for the last few days."

The commission had been struck off to investigate the allegations in a 1977 *Toronto Globe and Mail* article by Lawrence Martin that the RCMP has utilized information obtained through violating the confidentiality of Ontario health records in its campaign of harassment and disruption of left wing groups. Following a statement by the commission's counsel, Harvey Strosberg, widely reported in the press, that "on the evidence before the commission, the use by the RCMP of medical information, however obtained, for disruptive purposes in Ontario did not take place," Dowson presented two letters to the commission for investigation.

Although these letters, surreptitiously circulated at a December 1972 convention of a youth organization, the Young Socialists [associated with the League for Socialist Action], had been submitted by the Revolutionary Workers League [RWL] to the McDonald Commission of Inquiry a year previously, and although the RCMP had appointed a coordinator to all four commissions, they never came before the Krever Commission. Three months earlier RCMP officials had even assured the commission that they had turned over all available information on RCMP access to medical information. The March 9 Krever Commission's session heard RCMP Superintendent I.W. Taylor admit that the RCMP wrote and circulated the letters falsely claiming that John Riddell, then a leading member of the LSA and now of the RWL, was forced to get psychiatric help, in order "to sow dissension in the socialist community."

In the process of this hearing, particularly in the questioning of Riddell and RWL activist John Steele, the RCMP sought to justify its law-breaking by implying that the LSA was "violence-prone," and in fact "subversive" as defined in the Criminal Code — "advocating social change by violent and undemocratic means." It claimed it was implementing the secret order-in-council "mandate of the security service," formalized on March 27, 1975.

On March 28, Dowson, who was executive secretary of the LSA until August 1972 when he became chairperson, took the stand to rebut the rationalizations of the RCMP. The following is the actual hearing record of a small portion of that session, slightly edited for style only. from **Forward**, May, 1979.

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Testimony at Krever Hearings

Kopyto. Mister Dowson, I understand that there is one pamphlet which describes the aims and purposes of the League of Socialist Action more clearly than any other, and it is titled What the League for Socialist Action is, and what it stands for. It was produced at a time when the League for Social Action was established in 1961, and it is signed by you. I would simply read one or two brief sentences from this pamphlet. I am looking at the first page of this pamphlet.

A. Why don't I read it, since I wrote it?

Q. Well, if you would limit yourself to simply reading perhaps the second and third paragraph in the pamphlet, because I think that it is not necessary to go into much greater depth.

A. Is it in order, sir, for me to make a few comments about the importance and significance of the pamphlet? For instance, in the course of these hearings, which I have attended in part, Mister Riddell and other persons have made comments about what the LSA is and what it wants. However, at the time that I came to see the attorney for your Commission, I presented him with a copy of this document with some other material because I considered this was the most relevant information a person could possibly seek. It is what we said about ourselves and it was adopted by the assembled members of the organization. So other opinions are interesting, but in my opinion don't have the weight that this document has. I would read a couple of sections of it, which I think are pertinent. I will not take too much time.

"The League for Socialist Action is a fusion of the Socialist Educational League, centered in Toronto, and the Socialist Information Center of Vancouver, and their supporters scattered across Canada. The League for Socialist Action is committed to unconditional support of the New Democratic Party in its aim to place workers' and farmers' governments in Ottawa and the provinces. Its purpose is (1) to bring together, to organize into an effective force, all supporters of the NDP who seek to win it to a class struggle program and a socialist objective; (2) to build the Party," (that's the NDP), "to participate in its day-to-day activities and to advance ideas that will give conscious direction to the working people of Canada and their struggles to defend and extend their interests. "

That's the first paragraph.

Q. Mister Dowson, would you describe as the point of demarcation between the League for Socialist Action and all other left wing groups in Canada or groups that call themselves Marxist that it has consistently supported the New Democratic Party or the CCF prior to it, virtually from the time of its inception?

A. I would say that's the hallmark of the League for Socialist Action and the forces around it, including the Young Socialists. This was adopted in 1961 and in the course of the subsequent radicalization,

particularly in the student movement, we were differentiated from all other currents (and of course attacked for this by many ultra-leftists) in that we told young radicals that they should find their place in the New Democratic Party and link their struggles with parallel efforts of the New Democratic Party, and we told them that they should look to support from the trade union movement and that they should identify themselves with and become part of the union movement as a whole. So this demarcated us from all other currents.

Q. Well, Mister Dowson, I am presenting to you, I believe you are in possession of a pamphlet entitled Trotskyism and the NDP...

Condition of membership

A. Just before you do that, Mister Kopyto, I didn't read another paragraph from What the League for Socialist Action is, and what it stands for. There was another paragraph. I think you mentioned it. I would just like to read it because I think it's highly pertinent, so the RCMP lawyers and everybody concerned should be aware of it. I would like them to take these matters up today. They are key questions. [reading] "Those associated together in the League for Socialist Action seek to join forces with all those who now understand this challenge" (note: that's to usher in a new world of peace and plenty), "in order to win the majority of the working class to this realization."

"Our support for the NDP is unconditional. Our participation is not contingent upon certain specific programmatic planks being adopted by the party and we lay down no terms as to who must be in the leadership of the party. We recognize the authority of the majority in democratic debate to decide the policy of the party and to elect the leadership it sees fit to pledge to implement that policy."

A very clear statement of our view — I believe — those few paragraphs. They are from the founding document of the League for Socialist Action and anybody who joined the League for Socialist Action during my period of leadership became acquainted with this document, because we consider it the basic statement. I might add, while it was not a formal decree — to my knowledge I cannot recall any resolutions being passed to this effect — it was clearly understood by anybody who came around the League for Socialist Action that they must join the NDP, because this was a primary responsibility, just as they had to join the trade union movement if there was a union in their area of work. It was considered to be, I would say, implicitly if not explicitly, a condition of membership.

Q. Mister Dowson, could you tell me what effect this kind of activity had on your organization and on the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes? I believe that you are in possession of a document of the YS/LJS that deals with the character of that organization and I believe you are in a position to tell me something about the character of the organization and what effect this kind of RCMP disruptive tactic would have on that organization.

A. Yes. Well, I happened to take advantage of some time at my disposal to peruse some documents of the Young Socialists. The Young Socialists hasn't figured very prominently in this hearing, but actually it was the direct target of the dirty tricks of the RCMP.

The Young Socialists have been described by Mister Riddell as a Trotskyist organization. I would qualify that. The Young Socialists was a youth organization with fraternal relations to the League for Socialist Action. It was not under the discipline or domination or control of the League for Socialist Action. It was autonomous. And as a matter of fact, great efforts were made by myself and my co-thinkers in the League for Socialist Action at that time to assure its autonomy, that it would decide its own policies, its own positions. And in this document which I will just refer to, there is a reproduction of two documents, two position papers on YS/LSA relations which describe what are the proper relations between an adult member of the League for Socialist Action and a youth member of the YS. The YS recruited on a more

simple plane. A lower level of ideology. Not that we thought youth were not capable of assimilating our views, but young people have other interests. They were primarily concerned about the war in Vietnam, immediately concerned with the struggle on the campuses and in the high schools, which were not the direct concern of the League for Socialist Action. They had autonomy to make their own decisions.

Now we gave them advice, you know, our opinions, when we were asked. That's outlined in the relations here. But I think Mister Kopyto is probably thinking about the problem of drugs that I have raised in some conversations with him and the impact that the lack of security of health records would have on the youth movement.

Security of health records

I think it would have a considerable impact, the effect of that letter. The fact that it was true that Mister Riddell had psychiatric aid and help would have even a greater impact than if it was a lie. Many people are prepared to face lies and dismiss them. But if it's true, there are further implications of concern. Not that Mister Ridden was a weak person because he had psychiatric aid. I would like to think that the persons in the Young Socialists were above such an assessment of another human being, that because a person had psychiatric aid, they were therefore a little bit unstable and not to be taken too seriously. I believe YSers and LSAers were above that response. It's common in society. Not to idealize the organization. But I did have occasion to refer to this regulation that existed in the YS prohibiting the use of drugs. And I think it is rather pertinent. You see, if the RCMP has that information, they have probably all kinds of other information, although the RCMP has assured this Commission at each stage they had no more, nothing else.

But I would think that a person in the Young Socialists in particular, hearing that medical information which was essentially accurate was available and could be disseminated through the organization, would be concerned — for instance, if they had some trouble with pot, which was widespread among the youth radicalization; if they had gone to a doctor or anybody, and that became known. Because, of course, this would mean their expulsion from the YS. If I could read this pertinent paragraph:

"The YS/LJS has a very firm position— "I should tell you what this is first. It's a document titled The Organizational Character of the YS/LJS. A very official document, an explanation by the organization of its character.

[Reads] "The YS/LJS has a very firm position on illegal drugs. No member of the YS/LJS is to have anything to do with illegal drugs and is not to live in the same place..." — is not to even live in the same place — " . . .as anyone using illegal drugs."

Very stringent.

[Continues reading] " The movement cannot be open to reprisals by the police and the courts on non-political grounds. We must not give the police any excuse for harassing us, creating an atmosphere of illegality around our movement. Reprisals on drug charges may ebb and flow, but this is irrelevant to the policy of the movement."

It would appear to some persons that, well, the police aren't going to bother about it now. But the document said police reprisals may ebb and flow. That's irrelevant to our policy.

[Continues reading] "Also we know that along with drugs, there is a drug culture. The drug culture is alien to Trotskyism. It is idealist, based on personal liberation rather than social revolution. We have to consciously oppose the drug culture, educating new members in our materialist concepts. The policy of the movement on drugs should be clear to all comrades when they join. All comrades should be educated

in the concept of our movement about the nature of our movement so that they can understand our policy on drugs."

Concern with police reprisals

That policy was enforced, to my knowledge, in the Young Socialists quite stringently. Because, as I say, they didn't want the movement to be open to harassment by the police. Well, I think that the letter on RiddeIl, all the more that it is based on substantial information of a factual character, would cause anybody who had a drug problem to think twice about going to see a doctor; or if they had gone to see a doctor, they would think twice about what effect it is going to have. I would say it would ricochet on all things. For instance, as we all know there are many VD clinics in Toronto for young people, in particular those who are not acquainted with some of the problems of sexual relations, and I would assume that anybody who had gone to a VD clinic might not be protected, as some doctor recently admitted protecting very eminent people — "respectable" people. I suppose You know some doctors said they didn't report to the authorities that these people were treated for VD, but I am sure that anybody in the YS would feel quite certain that they would be reported, and that this information would be available to the RCMP.

Of course, there was a lot of co-mingling, fraternal and sororrial relations between members of the YS and if it was known that one of them had VD and was being treated, it could have serious effects.

Q. At this particular convention in 1972, do you have knowledge as to the character of this convention and whether there were non-members of the YS who might have been in attendance who, if they had been exposed to these letters, might have been affected thereby?

A. Oh, the policy of the Young Socialists was to have their convention open — very open. They had some closed sessions, but YS conventions were run much like NDP and Liberal Party conventions. They were utilized to build a big feeling for the movement, to present the broad views of the movement in a rally of support. And out of these actions, at these actions, many persons were attracted — became friends of the movement, possible contacts, potential new members. And of course, there were the followers of the movement, which is not irrelevant either. So it is not excluded that some of this information, if it had become available to persons at that convention would be used by the opponents of the movement. I might say that it is interesting to see that Mister Steele testified that this material was rapidly gathered up. I suppose that comes from a feeling that it had to be handled by the YS in a proper way. Not in the way as was suggested by one of the questioners, to suppress it; but so that it could be used in an educational way, so it wouldn't unduly startle persons who were not prepared for such a thing.

I would like to pursue that question of the effect on the movement, if! may.

Q. Yes.

A. Yes. I have given some thought to it. I think it's a most serious question. What's the purpose of the harassment? I don't think it's any mystery. I think the RCMP has divulged its purpose. It's to make it difficult for the movement to function, to set up internal conflicts in the movements. For instance, in the Keable Commission investigation it was freely admitted that the files of the Montreal l'Agence Presse Libre that were stolen had been sought by another group for their mailing purposes. They were stolen in part, it was revealed, by the RCMP to convince the people who possessed those files that this other current that had wanted to borrow them, stole them. Because they had been earlier refused the use of them.

So the whole concept of the dirty tricks, as they are called, has been very clearly outlined by the RCMP. Their purpose was to cripple the movement and cause dissension within it, to isolate it. A series of repercussions were hoped to come from it.

Well, in my opinion, it had some results. The RCMP wasn't wrong. I have a certain respect for the RCMP, a certain fear of the RCMP. I think justifiably, but a certain respect. I think in many ways they know what they are doing. As a matter of fact, in my opinion, the purpose of this whole incident — this effort and other efforts which are not unknown to members of the YS and the LSA — was primarily to create an atmosphere that the League for Socialist Action and other like organizations on the Left, I must add, are, if not in law, illegal, they are in fact illegal. I think that's what that is all about — to create the atmosphere in the Left that anybody coming around these organizations is going to have a tough time. We are not stopping you, you know; you can join those organizations. But you can't join these organizations like you would walk around the block. And you can't just say, "yes, I agree with those organizations and I am going to promote those ideas. They are good ideas." You know, there is a price to pay to join those organizations. That's what these dirty tricks are about — to tell people there is a price you are going to pay....

Anti-working class record

Now you ask why did young YSers automatically respond with the ideas that those were RCMP letters. Someone asked that here. Well now, people are not unfamiliar with the RCMP. This is not the first experience we have had with the RCMP. One thing, Young Socialists — persons who I know and persons who I have any possibility of influencing — they learn something about the RCMP because I try to tell them about the RCMP. I tell them about Estevan. I tell them about the Winnipeg General Strike. I tell them about various experiences the working class in this country has had with the RCMP, and it's a long extended experience. I tell them about the Native Peoples and their experience with the RCMP — that they drove them into the reservations. I have no hesitation about telling them this because I think they should know the facts of life. I don't tell them to frighten them, to startle them. But I think they need to know what we are up against, what humanity is up against, what's involved in the so-called democratic process. Cutting across the democratic process we hear about all the time is the policy and conduct of the RCMP, in my opinion.

Now, it caused great uneasiness in the YS itself, internally. You see, people would take their distance from one another. Where did this letter come from? It's based on fact. How were the facts ascertained? Who got the facts? Who circulated it? So they assumed it was circulated by the RCMP. I don't know whether that's a correct assumption. I think it is, but I don't know whether it is. It's not excluded, and perhaps the RCMP may claim that some dissident in the YS circulated it. I am prepared to accept that, if it is proven, but I believe all the evidence would suggest that it was the RCMP that circulated the letters.

But at any rate, this type of material causes great unease in an organization, in personal relations, in a feeling of the integrity, the harmony, the inner confidence a person requires to have in a movement that is a committed movement — a movement that attracts the young, idealistic human beings who want to do something for humanity. That's what it does. It causes a great feeling of uneasiness. It makes out that we are something other than what we are, and it's made in the name of the power, the supreme power, in this society. It's not to be ignored. It's not what some individual says about the organization, you see. It's not some opinion. But the RCMP is there as a force and the RCMP is known to be the police force of the federal state. So it has a very serious impact. I don't think it would kill a movement, but it would isolate a movement if it was a persistent and long-carried campaign. And in my opinion, the price we are paying for the RCMP's dirty tricks, that span several decades, is a weaker labor movement, a weaker socialist movement in Canada than one could reasonably believe there should be.

For instance, I came into the socialist movement and I thought the ideas were so crystal clear. They were so scientific. At the same time as I was reading Marx and Engels and their scientific explanation of the nature of the workings of the capitalist society, I was also reading physics and botany and zoology, and their ideas seemed to me to be so valid and unchallengeable in their lucidity, that I had to think why is it

that, why don't these ideas have greater support and a greater backing in the population as a whole? Because while they are not widely circulated, they are not exactly suppressed either. They are available. There are bookstores of the Left and Marx's and Engels' writings are available. The only way I could explain this was that there are powerful forces carrying out a massive, consistent campaign from positions of authority against these ideas. A powerful campaign which takes on many forms and, in the case of the RCMP — this harassment. For instance, many strikes have been broken in Canada by the RCMP. This is an historic fact. Workers...

Kopyto. I would like to ask you a few very specific questions now.

Target is unions and NDP

Dowson. Well, before you go in another direction, I would just like to put one point in here if I may, sir. That is, what the nature of this campaign is and what its objective is. It had another objective and I think I must bring it to your attention. You see, the LSA doesn't exist in a vacuum. Didn't exist in a vacuum. Nor did the YS. It existed in real life, in the labor movement. We talked about the multiple character of its activities. Its members were members of the union movement, and as I said, they were in the NDP. In my opinion, the type of campaign the RCMP waged against the LSA, which is a small organization and on the scale of forces in Canada, a miniscule, unfortunately, a miniscule organization — nonetheless, it had connections with other organizations — in my opinion the fundamental aim, the real direction of the RCMP is against the trade union movement and against the NDP. And I believe the attacks against us had that significance and that importance.

For instance, the other day I was listening to a replay of a program Ed Murrow made on McCarthyism. Perhaps you had the privilege of seeing this replay of his program. McCarthyism, in the campaign of McCarthy, which hit Canada too — I remember it very well — it wasn't the particular persons that the FBI harassed and framed with the aid of this infamous man, McCarthy, but all kinds of other persons were swept up. Its aim was to develop a climate. I believe that's commonly agreed upon now — that the McCarthy campaign developed a climate in the country, a climate that was inimical, that was hostile to all progressive thought and all kinds of persons who you might say were progressives. Persons who had no substantial association with the radical movement. Friends, acquaintances, relatives — these persons also suffered. Well, I believe that the campaign the RCMP has been carrying — it is an historical fact that it has been directed against the labor movement for many, many years, and against minority currents in Canada, against the Native movement. But even this campaign against the LSA fundamentally was part of a drive against the whole Left and against democratic rights in this country. That's what really it's about and that's why we have fought it. That's our opinion. That we are just the most susceptible, the most vulnerable, because we are the weakest and least able to protest. And while we have made some protests, as you can see from that list of eminent supporters of my suit, in general it has been a most difficult process for small groups to defend themselves against this malicious type of campaign. And therefore I must say it creates a climate, and I felt it in my membership in the CCF some years before, and in the NDP now — I feel the impact of this campaign. It has raised some questions in honest people's minds in the NDP where I work, that — what's Dowson really all about? What motivates him? He must have some other purpose! It tries to create the atmosphere that I am some kind of conspirator, some kind of double-talker, you know. He says this, but really underneath it all is something much more sinister. And I think that's one of the fundamental purposes of this campaign. And I must say from my own experience — it has unfortunately a considerable impact, and that's why of course I am protesting it.

from Forward, May, 1979.

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RCMP "Red Herrings"

(Continuation of testimony at Krever Hearings)

Kopyto. It has been suggested from previous questioning of John Riddell and John Steele by the RCMP's lawyer that the League for Socialist Action, which was the Canadian section of the Fourth International, was under the direction of an operation based in Paris, which ordered various sections in the various countries to undertake certain acts in order to achieve the ends of socialist revolution "by any means necessary". The question has also been raised as to whether your organization was an agent of some foreign government or power. If this is true, this would tend to contradict what you have said about a non-conspiratorial nature of your organization, sir. Could you comment on that particular point?

A. You have raised many matters. Maybe I will have to segment them to answer. I am well acquainted with the Fourth International. I would appreciate any questions from any source about it. I played a leading role for a certain period in the central office of the Fourth International. I am acquainted with all the leaders of the Fourth International at that time and generally am acquainted with the problems of the various sections of the Fourth International.

Kopyto. If I might interrupt, the League collaborated with various secretaries of Leon Trotsky, with Joseph Hansen and with George Novak in the United States who was a collaborator in various books with Leon Trotsky and you are a political associate of other individuals who have been personally associated with Leon Trotsky. Is that correct, sir?

The Fourth International

A. That is true. I resided in Europe at the time that questions here relevant to the Fourth International were raised. I was there. Mr. Riddell went over subsequent to my having been there for some considerable period of time.

I am not sure just how far I should go into detail. In an inquiry such as this you hear the questions the various attorneys have raised earlier. I am inclined to answer some of them, if it's in order to do so, because I think there is an atmosphere now around this question and, if I may, I would say something about the Fourth International and what the disputes were and what the issues were. I think it's relevant.

There was a big dispute in the Fourth International, particularly when I was in what has been called the operating center in Paris. I was in Paris but was for the most part in the real center which was Brussels. I was mostly there. I was there for unbroken periods of five, six months at a time, at various times.

There was a big dispute in the movement. A big political dispute that split the movement. There was a minority-majority, but it split it down the middle. It was referred to in this letter which Mister Kopyto brought to my attention earlier in this questioning, "Loyalty to the International means above all in practice loyalty to its Canadian section". (The RCMP admitted to forging this letter.)

This dispute was around a political position that certain persons wanted the world movement to adopt as a guide to the various sections. The Fourth International has no wealth, let me assure you of that. It has no funds, no resources which it can disburse as largesse, as Stalin did, or that even the early Comintern had at its disposal. It has no resources and it has no authority in the sense that it would even dare attempt to intervene in a section and say — well, this current holds to our position and we support it, and we are going to foster it and promote it, and we are going to move against all others.

Any section that I ever knew, that I was acquainted with, and speaking for myself as a leader of the so-called Canadian section of the Fourth International at that time, would never have tolerated such interference. That's Stalinism. We would have told any member, any International leader who attempted to carry out such a policy — we would tell him to go to hell! And if we were unable to defend our right to

do so, I would think we would break from the Fourth International because of course our relations are voluntary. It was a voluntary relation. Just as membership in the LSA was a completely voluntary relation. Nothing happened to anybody who left the LSA and who denounced it, I'm quite sure. I know of no incident. Nothing ever happened to anybody — and so likewise to any section. As a matter of fact, James P. Cannon, who was one of the leaders of the world Trotskyist movement, at one critical juncture in 1953, did just that! He told the international leadership, which had a majority, a formal majority, he told them to go to hell and he led an international split which was only overcome through a reunification until some ten years later. I participated in that reunification and that was perhaps my major participation in the Fourth International.

Guerrilla warfare as strategy

Now this is an association of sister groups — a free association. It is unchallengeable in my experience, aside from what is correct theory about international working class relations, that these groups are autonomous. What the international does, through a collective exchange of opinion, is try to deal with the overall problems of the world, exchange experiences and to come to some conclusions of a broad, sweeping general character. It does not interfere in sections and certainly does not dictate to them the tactics that they are required to adopt and follow. However, after the unification took place, with the reunification in 1963, a big dispute broke out over the question of guerrilla warfare, which the RCMP's lawyer brought to Mister Steele's attention. I should take a few minutes to say what it involved.

The Fourth International never told anybody to get into the guerrilla struggle. Never sent any money to anybody to buy guns and to go back into the hills somewhere, like Che — like Che Guevara — and start a process which would ultimately, as the theory of guerrillism expounds, ultimately provide a foci, and then move into the cities and settle accounts with the central reactionary dictatorial power. The guerrilla concept, of course, flows from the situation existing in Latin America where there are no democratic forms of expression open to the revolutionary party. I was interested in your differentiation, Mr. Commissioner, of the situation today in Canada from that in Russia in 1917. Of course they are not at all similar.

Kopyto. What about Iran?

A. Well, let me say that the concept of guerrilla struggle was a concept that was developed by sincere revolutionaries to meet the specific problems that confronted them in order to approach the masses, to organize the masses, to implement their democratic rights and their will — by armed struggle — to weaken the military authority of the bureaucracy, the military hierarchy, that controlled and still controls many Latin American countries. But it did not say that that policy must be the policy of all the component sections of the Fourth International.

However, one of the top leaders of the Fourth International proposed at one of the congresses that it should adopt the concept of guerrilla warfare as a strategy for all of Latin America. A colossal innovation! Unprecedented in the history of not just the Fourth International, but the Second and Third insofar as they are part of a continuity. The division between the First, Second, Third and Fourth International is not quite so sharp as you suggested earlier, Commissioner Krever. They are a part of a whole process. One comes out of the other and leftovers remain. But at any rate, this was an innovation for a leader of the Fourth International — that the world movement should adopt a policy, that it should promote armed struggle, guerrilla warfare on a Latin American continental basis. He never suggested for a minute that it should be applied in Canada, because such a concept would have been laughed out of court. It would have been ridiculed. But in Latin America, it seemed to make some sense to many persons, particularly new, young and enthusiastic forces that came to the Fourth International out of the May, 1968 events in France and elsewhere in that whole student upsurge. They thought it was "the latest", and a great innovation, and a very useful thing, and should be adopted — and it was adopted by a majority vote. But I must tell you

that the Fourth International was not governing itself by what are known as the principles of democratic centralism. It was not binding on anybody. It could not have been, and any attempt on the part of those persons who won adoption of that policy to make it binding, if they had attempted to impose it on the movement along the lines that all sections must adopt and implement it, would have resulted in a split. Just like that!

Canadian position clear

So it was adopted as a policy. But I must also tell you, although I never participated in this more recent development, this policy has now been repudiated by the majority of the Fourth, those who remain in the Fourth International. I have heard on good authority, and I have seen the document, that it has been completely repudiated by the majority.

But it was an unfortunate episode. Sections of the movement were misdirected. That's a disagreement within the Fourth International. I think it was a valid disagreement. I must say that to my knowledge, never did any of the forces of the Fourth International go about financing such projects. I know that the Canadian section, which I do know very well, never sent any money to anybody for guerrilla warfare. We didn't think this was the tactic at all. We didn't think it was our responsibility to tell anybody to do that. It was up to each section to decide its own tactics.

In my opinion, in the LSA's collective opinion, the concept of guerrilla warfare is a tactic which might under certain circumstances be adopted — by the persons who are going to carry it out, and not be told to do so. I would reject it out-of-hand in Canada today. And so that is, I think that's what you need to know about that dispute on guerrilla warfare as a continental strategy — it has now been repudiated.

But a few words more about the Fourth International. The Fourth International is a voluntary organization. It is not governed by the principles of democratic centralism. It basically exchanges experiences and ideas. I am not affiliated through any organization nor do I have anything to do with the Fourth International at this time. The Fourth International does not include all who might be considered Trotskyists. There are parallel organizations which are almost as big as the formation that claims to be the Fourth International — almost as big with their own international connections in Europe and elsewhere. And I say that the policy of guerrilla warfare was never adopted by the LSA. Anybody who wants to know what was the position of the LSA on this question should examine its press. It publicly disassociated itself from this position, which is rather unusual. It did so publicly. It didn't just say we disagree, you know, and we are not going to implement that policy. It said we don't assume any responsibility for that policy. We publicly issued declarations and statements in the name of the LSA — which was the section of the Fourth International in Canada, at that time — we publicly disassociated ourselves from that. We condemned it and advised anybody who would listen to us that it was a false concept. I think that covers that matter.

The Waffle and the NDP

Commissioner Krever: With regards to the differences in the Canadian group that the RCMP letters were designed to exploit, I understand that there were two specific issues — the New Democratic Party — support for the NDP — and the question of Canadian nationalism. Now I was just wondering with respect to these issues do you know what was being discussed at the Young Socialists convention in 1972?

A. Oh, yes.

Commissioner Krever: What was the difference at that point?

A. I must say that I wasn't there. I didn't participate in the discussion, and I wasn't up on it in a complete sense. I had other concerns and other worries, but I have looked up the press, which of course is the key

source — where you have to go if you want the facts —because we write about what we do. In the press — in the report of that convention —there was a winged phrase — that the convention rejected —well I can't give you the exact words now, but they were to the effect that it opposed "Canadian nationalism in all its forms" . Something to that effect. Well, that was a matter of dispute in the Canadian section — in the League.

With regards to the Waffle experience — it has some relevancy —we of the LSA were actively involved long before the Waffle appeared in the arena.

Kopyto. In the NDP, you mean?

A. In the NDP. Pardon me. Active in the NDP long before the Waffle appeared in the arena. As a matter of fact, the Waffle Manifesto first saw the light of day in our press — much to the consternation of some of the leaders of the Waffle. We published it because we thought it belonged to the people of Canada, and we published it with no compunction. They didn't like it. They thought it should be handled by them some way. I don't know what their arguments were.

At any rate, the Waffle was the result of a response of important sections, particularly in the youth radicalization but other elements too — it even influenced Mister Barrett, who subsequently became the premier of B.C., Mister Broadbent, who is now the head of the NDP — he was supportive of the Waffle at one time. It reflected a response among the Canadian people, important sections of the Canadian people, against the encroaching domination by American capitalism of the Canadian economy. That's what it reflected. It called itself nationalist.

We had occasion to examine this, because of course while they called themselves nationalists, they projected socialist solutions. So what is this nationalism? It is an abstract question in some ways, but not uninteresting. Nationalism traditionally, in advanced capitalist countries, is bourgeois. It is reactionary. It's to fool the workers, to convince the workers they have no part separate (from), no interests separate from, those of the ruling class — that we are all together in one nation. So traditionally according to Marxism, nationalism, in an economy such as Canada, and I must say such as Quebec too which also has an advanced capitalist economy, nationalism is (traditionally —ed.) considered to be bourgeois and reactionary.

But I came to the conclusion this nationalism wasn't of that character. Marxism is very innovative, in my opinion. It is not guided by dogma and formal logic. I came to the conclusion that this nationalism was radical and progressive and my impression was affirmed by the relations my co-workers formed with people in the Waffle. I considered they were moving to a revolutionary socialist position, to a Trotskyist view, in general, so I identified with them.

This became a big matter of contention.

Trotskyism and the NDP

Commissioner Krever: . I understand the other matter was around the New Democratic Party and if I might sum it up for you in a few seconds, I understand that it was the opinion, it was your opinion that...

A. I'll answer the question quickly. On the question of the New Democratic Party, it was obvious to me and some co-thinkers who were united with me on the nationalist question, that the movement was in the process of dumping its long-standing orientation to the NDP —imperceptibly, and somewhat, in my opinion, dishonestly. And I tried to bring this out and open up a discussion. So at this critical juncture there were two big issues of contention in the Canadian movement, along with the issues of the world movement...

Kopyto. Mister Dowson, there is one final area I wish to explore with you, that is the matter of violence. A great deal has been said by a number of people about it. Now I would present to you a pamphlet entitled Trotskyism and the NDP. It is sub-headed,

"The following article is based on a speech by Ross Dowson, executive secretary of the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, to the St. George (Toronto) NDP Constituency Association meeting of May 17, 1972. Dowson was introduced by David Middleton, president of the constituency association and NDP candidate in the last provincial election."

Now I believe that this pamphlet outlines the general position of the LSA on the New Democratic Party. But there is one section in it that deals explicitly and fully with the position that this organization took on the subject of violence and social change.

A. Yes. If I might just say a word about that pamphlet, as such. Mister Middleton is now in the St. George NDP Constituency Association with me. But at that time I was not in the NDP. I was the leader of the LSA. I had no time and energy to get involved in the NDP, but he invited me because I was known to many of the NDPers there and I think, respected. And so I made the speech about "What Trotskyism Is." You know, what Trotskyism is is a big question. In my opinion, it is very difficult to say exactly what it is. It is something relevant to a specific time because it is a Marxist political movement which deals with political issues of the time. If someone came along at a certain time and were to ask me what is Trotskyism — well I could outline it, enumerate it on the key questions of the time, what we have to say on them. That's the way I would answer such a question.

Parliament and socialism

So I tried to tell them what Trotskyism is in a general way in this speech, and there are a couple of sections I would like to put in the record in case the lawyers for the RCMP have not had time to read it. I'll just put it on the record and you can hear it.

"All socialists, including revolutionary class struggle socialists, would prefer the realization of a socialist society by peaceful means. No great transition in history has ever been achieved peacefully — no ruling class heretofore has ever left the stage of history without resorting to the most desperate and most violent struggle, even threatening to take all society down with it. There is no reason to believe that the capitalist class in North America who resist modest union demands so bitterly, armed with the H bomb and faced with the loss of the very source of their wealth and power at home, would peacefully depart from the scene should the revolutionary aspirations of the masses rally a majority in a parliamentary election.

"The problem is not that the NDP leadership oppose extraparliamentary action. Under certain circumstances they are prepared to employ it with great vigor —but only as a device, distinctly supplementary—as a form of pressure, to increase their weight in parliament or the weight of parliament itself within the state apparatus.

"The NDP leadership affirm parliament and bourgeois electoral politics as the only road to social progress, when the ruling class everywhere have shown themselves in no way committed to parliamentary democracy. In times of crisis they (the ruling class) are prepared to treat it as a mere façade covering over the real power structure, hiding the state apparatus constructed to defend bourgeois property by any means necessary" — that fateful phrase — (an aside by Dowson) "including force and violence. "We no longer need refer to Spain, Germany or the Winnipeg General Strike and Section 98. We have the experience of Quebec, October, 1970."—

Interesting, and I commented on that. (Another aside by Dowson.)

"By a simple act of four cabinet ministers, after an hour's work on documents signed and dispatched by the governor general, Canada awoke on an October morning to find the institutions of parliamentary democracy completely swept aside and the army and police in charge.

The LSA sees parliament and electoral campaigns as an important area of activity, but as a propaganda forum and as a test of ideas. For us, the new social order can only be constructed through the self-action of the masses themselves."

Democracy and Revolution

Now I had occasion to develop that theme further — and I want you to know everything. I wrote a pamphlet called *The Coming Canadian Revolution*. I gave that to the counsel of this commission, Mister Strosberg, first thing because I thought, well, it's going to come up — so what do we have to say about this. I expound on this *Coming Revolution* and I don't pull any punches as to what it is.

It is worth noting that there is nothing in this pamphlet about violence. I don't know how that is to be explained by someone who thinks that the Trotskyists are advocates and initiators of violence. I didn't even write about this. I hardly mentioned it — although I did write about the transition to power. But there is almost nothing about violence.

In fact, I wrote about violence — in bourgeois society. I wrote about class antagonisms, which I think are an undeniable fact of our present day society. This society is divided along class lines. And of course the conflict between the worker and the employer is a class antagonism. A very destructive antagonism in my opinion, speaking as a Socialist and a Marxist. It is a destructive antagonism. We want to eliminate it. That's what the struggle for socialism is all about.

"Far from promoting class antagonisms and conflicts (I am reading a paragraph here, in which I refer to Marx.) Marx saw them as an integral part of, as being built right into the capitalist system. 'If', as he expressed it in the famed *Communist Manifesto*, which he wrote with the youthful Engels, the working class 'is compelled to organize as a class, if by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and as such sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms, and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class'."

This is a basic concept of Marxism. I wrote about the revolution, but to me — I am astonished — it never ceases to astonish me when I hear people talk about the revolution — as violent. To me the revolution is a great liberatory concept, a great ideal, you might say even a romantic concept. The French Revolution? Yes, I know about *The Terror*. But I think that was incidental to the revolution, to this great event.

And I know about the Cromwellian period and the regicide. But that was incidental to the great liberatory impact this revolution had on British society. It opened up a whole new world.

So when I comment on the revolution, I didn't write about the violence which has often accompanied it. I wrote about its liberatory aspects and that's what this pamphlet is about, primarily. So I continue, following the subhead *Towards Freedom* — that's what the struggle is about:

"Far from being proponents of some all-engulfing statism, Marx and Engels saw the state, as class antagonisms dissipated, beginning to wither away — being transformed from an instrument to preserve democracy into an administrative tool."

I will jump a whole section on to another:

"Whereas Confederation," (It's a Canadian pamphlet, of course. I always want to talk about Canada. That's what socialists want to deal with. We want to learn what we can from elsewhere but I want to write about Canada):

"Whereas Confederation was foisted on our forefathers, the coming Canadian revolution will be the most profoundly democratic act in our entire history. Those forces that have built and sustained a mighty union movement, created and sustained a mass political party of their own (the NDP) who will overcome all the chicanery and deception of the ruling class and their high priced help to storm and conquer the very citadels of their power, are not likely to succumb to the blandishments of some two-bit operators who might inveigle their way into its ranks for their own purposes. The profoundly democratic instruments necessary to mobilize the vast majority of the population to such a titanic task will separate out the opportunists and the frauds."

I could read some more but I don't want to infringe unduly on the Commissioner's time. But I hope that the legal profession here takes this document as a serious expression of our views and I would like to move on to another aspect of the question, unless you wish...

Kopyto: Well, I think it might be useful to move towards concluding your comments. But if there is some other important point —

Dowson: Yes. There are a couple of comments which Mister Krever himself raised and I would like to answer them. I appreciate, sir, that you have moved off, some degrees off the immediate terms of reference of the Commission, but the RCMP's line of questioning of Mr. Riddell and Mr. Steele has made a lot of things relevant to the Commission's hearing and I think you yourself have, in your search for some of my and other persons' views.

For instance, you made a statement in the record here, sir, that, "wouldn't Leon Trotsky turn over in his grave if he had heard his name being associated with a group that says the change in society is to come about by free elections". I gather you think that's what Mister Riddell said. That socialism would come about by free elections. I would like to comment on this.

You also said to Mister Riddell at another stage, "Your group believes in the inevitability of violent overthrow of existing capitalist governments." You also said, "It could be concluded that the LSA holds to the view of the need to overthrow existing capitalist governments and society by force". These are clear positions. I think they are not novel positions, and have been answered by the socialist movement. I would like to answer them not only by expressing my own opinions, which could be subject to question, could be considered not to be really authoritative, but with the views of such persons as, for instance, Leon Trotsky himself. If I could take a few minutes I would bring to your attention a couple of statements by such authorities on this question.

Marxists have always said, and as a matter of fact James P. Cannon, who was placed on trial under the Smith Gag Ad in the United States in 1941 — this is the court record of the trial (Dowson hands Commissioner Krever a copy of the pamphlet Socialism on Trial). Cannon said (on page 135) "It is the opinion of all Marxists that the transformation of society from capitalism to socialism, the revolution, will be accompanied by violence".

I believe that's quite different from saying it would be accomplished by violence. I think the words are important. It will be "accompanied". I believe there has been no revolution that hasn't been accompanied by violence, but is it accomplished by violence? Well if you say accomplished by violence, you are saying that the revolutionaries, those who oppose the status quo, present conditions, they were the instigators of the violence, or the promoters, or the organizers of the violence. And not the forces of the counter-revolution.

Truth on Russian experience

I should bring to your attention, sir, that Leon Trotsky considered in his great work, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, and in a sense it is relevant to us here in Canada — that the Russian revolution was a peaceful revolution. He comments extensively on the transition to power. I am not sure I have it absolutely correct in my memory but only five or six people were hurt or killed in the October revolution in the actual transfer of power.

As a matter of fact, and this may be astonishing to you, sir, Lenin, the great revolutionary tactician and politician, considered that the Russian Revolution could be peaceful — could be peaceful. And he thought it was going to be peaceful. Even against a regime under which there was the utmost degradation of human beings — strikes were illegal, unions were illegal, parliamentary expression of popular views was suppressed and in general didn't exist.

Well, Lenin thought that this transition in Russia could come about by peaceful means and I'm now just trying to find a statement by Lenin — yes. On page one–forty–one. I am resorting to this text and not the original text of Lenin, because it's a big task and it would take too much time. Cannon, who I respect as a Leninist and who had no cause or purpose to say anything other than Lenin's real views, had this to say — he quotes Lenin and he quotes Trotsky. Let me just get the Lenin quote first, p. 141.

Well, without going into — oh, I marked it, did I? Yes I Without going into details maybe it would be too time-consuming to give you all of the quote.

Possible peacefully — Lenin

For the convenience of our readers we reproduce the relevant quotation:

"On still another occasion, September 14–16, 1917. Offering a 'compromise' to the Social Revolutionary and Menshevik majority, Lenin proposed that they form an SR–Menshevik government responsible only to the Soviets. Such a government, he said, 'in all probability could secure a peaceful forward march of the whole Russian Revolution.' Should the proposition be accepted by the SR's and Mensheviks, then: 'No other condition, would, I think, be advanced by the Bolsheviks, who would be confident that really full freedom of propaganda and the immediate realization of a new democracy in the composition of the Soviets [new elections to them] and in their functioning would in themselves secure a peaceful forward movement of the revolution, a peaceful outcome of the party strike within the Soviets.

"Perhaps this is already impossible? Perhaps. But if there is even one chance in a hundred, the attempt at realizing such a possibility would still be worthwhile" [Lenin, *Collected Works* Vol 21, Book 1, pp. 153–154].

"In this case, Lenin asked nothing more of the 'civil and military chiefs' among the 'ruling' petit–bourgeois democratic parties than that they take power and assure 'really full freedom of propaganda'. Returning to this question again on October 9, 1917, he wrote:

'Our business is to help do everything possible to secure the 'last' chance for a peaceful development of the revolution, to help this by presenting our programme, by making clear its general, national character, its absolute harmony with the interests and demands of an enormous majority of the population [p.257]' . " Without going into details, in the course of the revolution a parallel institution developed in Russia — parallel institutions called Soviets. These were democratic institutions which were recognized by all of the democratic forces in the October revolution, and reluctantly recognized by reaction. They became the center of discussion and policy — and not the parallel Provisional government.

With the development of this popular assembly, which was extremely responsive to the desires of the popular masses, both the workers in the armies, the workers in the factories, responsive to the rise and fall of the various contending political parties including Kerensky's Social Revolutionary party and the Bolsheviks, this very responsive body held open the possibility of a peaceful change. That was Lenin's conviction — that with the proper conduct by the Soviet government and open discussion of the problems, the majority would be won to the Bolshevik view.

I must say there was a debate among the Bolsheviks. It takes up a couple of chapters in The History of the Russian Revolution, whether they should wait for the congress of Soviets, the All-Russian Congress of Soviets. Or should the Bolshevik party with its great support among the vanguard elements of the October revolution move out independently. There was a debate between Lenin and Trotsky on this.

Trotsky said we should wait because we want the power legally. It's very important that it be established legitimately in the minds not only of the Russian people, but in the minds of the world's peoples, that this is a legitimate revolution and we should wait for the all-Russian Congress. This was a matter of debate. Later there was also a debate as to whether they should proceed with the Constituent Assembly, which was a popularly elected body. I must tell you that they did wait. The Bolsheviks waited until the All Russian congress of Soviets was held and the Bolsheviks turned out to have a majority and that majority issued in the transfer of power. The Czar had already been removed from his position of authority and we had in a sense a form of constitutional monarchy under Kerensky. The Czar was irrelevant. But you had also, this popular assembly which established its authority and we had this transition peacefully.

Shah's regime disintegrated

You mentioned Iran, Mister Kopyto. In my opinion, Iran, contrary to a few comments by Mister Riddell, was a remarkable affirmation of the peacefulness of this great social revolution. In my opinion there is a great social revolution taking place in Iran. We had a most oppressive regime under the Shah. This regime, it is common knowledge, has carried on a merciless assault on the most elementary of democratic rights and against those who tried to implement those democratic rights. The prisons of the Shah were full with the torn off limbs and organs of human beings. This regime had a secret police, a massive and powerful, all-pervasive institution, a ruthless one, and they also had a powerful elite army, an extremely elitist army. So what happened? I think it's a matter of historic record. This whole thing disappeared. I am not saying no one was killed in this struggle, but it collapsed. The transition was in effect a peaceful transition. That revolution is still in the process of developing, but I think it was a peaceful transition.

Anyway, that was the aim of the Bolsheviks and I know I am taking a lot of time and you want to get to lunch. I will not take it upon myself to read these parts. I will leave you a copy of Socialism on Trial, sir, and anybody who wants to read it will see that Lenin thought, that he conceived that the revolution in Russia was peaceful. That was their aim, that was what the Bolsheviks wanted to ensure, and in my opinion that's what they realized. And that's what I said in one of these documents that I read at this hearing. We visualize, as far as we are concerned, that we are going to be elected into office.

A great liberatory act

Now of course there have been socialist governments elected into office before. Someone referred to the Allende regime. The Allende regime went down in blood, including, tragically, Mister Allende's own blood.

Well, what happened there, in Chile? Mister Allende was elected into office. He carried out certain radical social changes. He was committed to further social change. Where did the violence come from and where the destruction? Regretfully it came about due to the fact that Mister Allende didn't prepare for what could only be conceived as inevitable attempts by the reactionaries to destroy his government — which had been democratically elected. So if you want to talk about violence, I don't want to relate it to

the revolution — and I think it is correct, historically, not to relate it to the revolution. I think that's a lie and a smear and a degradation of the great social upheavals in our society which have opened up new roads for humanity. The word revolution is a very sacred concept in my opinion. Not just in the sense of a revolutionary car design or a revolutionary technology, but the very concept itself. It means fundamental changes opening up. As for the concept of the violence — I think that must be absolutely, certainly, ascribed to the counter-revolution. It is not the desire and the aim of the revolution.

I thought that the series of questions that the RCMP's lawyer addressed to Mister Riddell the other day had a certain logic which he drew to its full. He asked Mister Riddell about the coming revolution, and Mister Riddell predicted, Mr. Riddell was certain...

Kopyto. Mister, Dowson, I think that perhaps this line of questioning might arise in cross-examination...

Mr. Commissioner. I would like you to reconcile two statements you made. That, when you talked about revolution, that in revolution, in your sense, a complete change of a social system, the ruling class has never failed to resort to force, to resist the majority of the people who are desirous of bringing about the change. Did you not make that statement?

A. Yes. Could I clarify it? Yes, I made that statement.

Mr. Commissioner. Could you reconcile that with the example of revolution which you and others have given, a very modern one, of Iran. It seemed to me that a decision was made after the Shah fled or left, by the army, that it would not use force against what it conceived to be the majority requiring a complete change of social system?

A. Yes.

Mr. Commissioner. Would you reconcile them, please?

A. Reconcile them? I don't see any contradiction. You see I would have added to the statement you attributed to me, which I didn't challenge because substantially it's correct, I would say—so far. I would add that qualification.

Mr. Commissioner. You mean until Iran?

A. Well, I don't know what's going to happen in Canada.

Mr. Commissioner. No, no.

It is apparent from the verbatim record that Mr. Dowson did not fully grasp the meaning of Commissioner Krever's question at this point and we have agreed to his request that he be permitted to make a short clarifying contribution for our readers. — The Editors

In Iran in late January, early February of this year the extremely repressive forces that had long sustained the Shah and his regime in power were not brought into action at the critical time against the revolutionary masses. This appears to contradict my statement to the effect that the ruling class never fails to resort to force to suppress the majority seeking a revolutionary change.

That statement should be qualified along the following lines — and in fact we might formulate a general law. The more united, the more militant, the clearer it is that the majority is prepared to carry its struggle

forward to the very end, the less is the ruling class able to mobilize resistance and frustrate the popular will.

In Iran we had several weeks of mounting, ever-more militant demonstrations of massive proportions. These won over vast numbers of vacillating elements of the population, created broad disaffection in the ranks of the army and even in the elitist police itself, and brought the Shah and his entourage to the realization that they were completely isolated and had no possibility of resistance — and so they fled.

The converse of our "law" is also true. The less united, the less decisive, the weaker, the more vacillating the forces for social change, the more certain is the old ruling class to resort to naked suppression. Witness Germany 1933 and, of course, Chile.

The nature and scope of the violence that the old ruling class is able to bring into play against the mounting forces for social change is determined by the real relationship of class forces. The aim of the socialists is not to substitute themselves for the working class but to increase the unity of the class, to sharpen its consciousness and raise its combativity so that it can implement its will. The greater the success of the socialists, the greater the possibility of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.

A. You see, I would not answer your question like Mister Riddell did. One after another the RCMP questions — where the whole course of those questions—where Mister Riddell said yes, yes! The whole course of the questioning was that I would be committed to violence since I was certain, according to Mister Riddell he was certain that violence was inevitable. Mister Riddell affirmed it many, many times, (With this Dowson stood up in the witness stand and pointing challengingly to the lawyers for the RCMP, declared) I am telling you now. If I was certain that we could not realize socialism by the democratic means, I wouldn't bother with the NDP. As a matter of fact, I would think it would be my responsibility to go now and speak to the RCMP about the despicable elements that are going to suppress the democratic right of the people and I would ask them to do their duty as a police force that's presumably above class conflicts. I would ask them to do their duty and move against those forces.

That's what a responsible citizen would do. I am not convinced as Mister Riddell appeared to be that violence is absolutely inevitable. I think Mister Riddell did not speak in the tradition of Trotskyism or the tradition of Leninism. I think he felt harassed by the RCMP questioner and he made statements which are not qualified and properly explanatory. I would add that so far, and Iran in my opinion is a great vindication of the democratic method. Now it wasn't the democratic method which is expressed by democratic parliamentary means because there was no such vehicle, no such form. I was inspired by developments in Iran, and it was something I look forward to.

Mr. Commissioner. It's hardly a Marxist revolution, is it?

A. The Marxists involved themselves in it, I hope. I wasn't there, but if I were there I would be right out in front supporting the whole movement as it moved forward, at that time under the leadership of Khomeini, a Moslem mystic. I would have still supported that, and you can see my view expressed in Forward for we identify ourselves with that revolution. We consider it was going to go on and beyond that, but we supported it as far as it went, and we didn't say we won't support it unless it does so and so. We laid no conditions down to its course of development. I would have been in the front lines if I were an Iranian and young enough I would identify myself completely with them.

Mr. Commissioner. Mister Dowson, thank you very much and particularly, I haven't heard such an enlightening discussion of Marxism for perhaps twenty-five, thirty years. But I particularly want to express my gratitude to you for bringing to our attention, to the attention of the Commission the letters which have been the subject of the hearings for the last few days.

A. Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Sharpe. Mister Commissioner, I believe that's the end of the evidence.
July/Aug. & Sept./Oct. 1979

from Forward,

Policy submission to Commissioner Krever

On June 14, at the same time as the RCMP submitted a massive five volumes of material, Ross Dowson made a policy submission of 4½ pages of double-spaced typed copy to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Confidentiality of Health Records. On April 17, Dowson made an extended verbal submission on matters of argument as to the evidence that had earlier been presented to the Commission.

Among the highlights of his June 14 submission was Dowson's recommendation that Commissioner Krever urge the Ontario attorney-general's office to immediately lay criminal charges against the RCMP for its violations of the Criminal Code of Canada. He also urged consideration of a proposition that Dowson had earlier raised before the federal McDonald Commission of Inquiry into RCMP violations of civil rights over a year ago — the abolition of the RCMP. Dowson stated that the RCMP's very existence is in violation of the BNA Act, as J.S. Woodsworth, founder of the CCF-NDP, pointed out years ago.

Below we reproduce the five summary points in Dowson's June 14 submission:

"The experiences of the Royal Commission in the above respect requires in our opinion that Commissioner Krever seriously consider among his recommendations:

1. That the RCMP must be publicly censured for its violation and its counselling others to violate the confidentiality of Ontario Health information;
2. That the Ontario attorney-general's office be asked to immediately lay criminal charges against the RCMP for its violation of the Criminal Code specifically sections 324 and 330 in respect to its use of the information that it obtained in violation of the confidentiality of health information;
3. That the so-called 'mandate' to harass and disrupt such groups as the League for Socialist Action which directed/encouraged the RCMP to violate the confidentiality of Ontario health information be reviewed by the appropriate federal authorities to assess whether the named organizations actually can be said to be subversive — that is, advocate social change by "violent and undemocratic means" or are in reality organizations of legitimate, political and social dissent, and that such organizations should have a full and proper hearing to defend themselves from being placed on what appears to be a federal government 'subversive' list;
4. That in light of the evidence before this commission that the Official Secrets Act and other relevant federal laws be amended to exclude the use of 'national security' considerations as an excuse to frustrate, block and prevent the expression of legitimate minority political and social dissenting views;
5. That in light of the RCMP's actions as revealed before this commission, in the course of the constitutional discussions that have been ongoing events and are certain to widen should the first Quebec referendum on sovereignty association rally substantial support and should Opposition leader Pierre Trudeau press for the patriation of the constitution [the BNA Act] proper and due consideration be given to the matter of the abolition of the RCMP. Its very existence is in violation of the BNA Act and it is in effect a para-military conspiratorial political police institution that is inimical to the democratic aspirations of the Canadian people."

from Forward, July/Aug., 1979

RCMP stymies Krever

Though the 14 month long public hearings of the Krever Commission wound to a close on July 4 they may be reconvened later this year. This will depend on the outcome of a last ditch stand by the RCMP to have the courts uphold its refusal to hand over to the royal commission the names of the doctors and health officials who gave it confidential health information.

Last May in what has been called a landmark judgment the Ontario Appeal Court ruled that the RCMP must hand over the names involved in 368 instances, some of which the RCMP claims were connected with counter intelligence operations of anti-terrorist surveillance. The judgment was that "informer" privilege did not apply to the RCMP's refusal to give the information to the Royal Commission. A subsequent appeal by the RCMP to have the case reopened resulted in a one line dismissal. However, the RCMP has appealed the Ontario court judgment and has been given the go-ahead to challenge it by three judges of the Supreme Court of Canada, headed by Chief Justice Bora Laskin.

Should the Supreme Court dismiss the RCMP's appeal when it sits in October, Justice Krever says he will reconvene the hearings although they might be held "in-camera" for reasons of "national security."
from Forward, July/Aug., 1979

Krever to RCMP on 'Thought control'

The following is an excerpt from the record of The Honourable Mr. Justice Horace Krever's comments on the RCMP submission on policy to the Ontario Royal Commission of Inquiry Into the Confidentiality of Health Records. Referring to the RCMP's forgery and distribution of letters to the League for Socialist Action's youth convention, Commissioner Krever said: ".... it may be that the public is not so prepared to allow the kind of thought control that is involved in the exercise of discretion that decides that a certain group, which has not been proscribed, which is not illegal, is carrying on activities which are not illegal, but they come within the mandate. It may well be that the public will draw the line and say, no, you can't have medical information because we are afraid you might use it for that purpose.

"Historically, when one looks back and takes the historical view, you don't have to be a political scientist or much of an historian to realize that at any given time in history, movements that became acceptable, including Christianity, at a certain time were considered to be subversive movements and hostile to the interests of the status quo of the state...I used Christianity as perhaps the most glaring example of what was considered to be so subversive that drastic measures had to be taken to deal with it, but in our own time and in your force's own time, the example that keeps recurring is that of the Winnipeg General Strike and the prosecution of various people, not East European Bolshevik immigrants, but people of Anglo-Saxon stock, members of the clergy, J.S. Woodsworth charged with sedition because an account, as I recall it, was simply one sentence from Isaiah. (Editor's note: 'Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed; to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people that widows may be their prey and that they may rob the fatherless.' — The Bible)

"Now, no doubt at the time there was a genuine belief on the part of the authorities who decided to prosecute these people that this kind of activity was a threat to the security of the state. It seems to me to be reasonable to look at it in an historical perspective, and I obviously am not, under my terms of reference, entitled to consider whether or not, as I gather Australia is doing, the internal subversion interests should be an interest given to an agency other than the agency that does the reasonable police work. That's not what I am concerned about. I am concerned about making recommendations which would give access for legitimate police purposes to a force that also has this other responsibility under the terms of a very broad mandate, which might include within it a group that twenty-five years from now will be a very respectable political party in Canada."

* * *

Lifting the veil on 'Checkmate' shame

by Ross Dowson

What we now know of the cold facts of Operation Checkmate is revealed in almost 750 pages of the "Top Secret" material released in late April by the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the RCMP, headed by Judge McDonald. Heavily censored and carefully "sanitized," it is sketchily outlined in what are designated as 14 Cases. While there are three cases numbered, 7, 8 and 14, without any explanation there is no information at all supplied on them. Information appears at several points in the record about an operation to seize a file of material from a "target" taking it through the streets of an unnamed Canadian city or town from one location to another. Possibly this operation is not separated out and numbered because its planners, reluctantly, had to scrap it when local officers expressed serious doubts about implementing it.

Although Operation Checkmate is said to be merely a continuation of two previous operations, about which there are no details at all — Operation Tent Peg (1969–71) and Operation Oddball (April 1971 to September 1972) — Operation Checkmate officially spanned the period from September 1972 to December 1973. Why the RCMP top brass ended this continuum in December 1973, although there is doubt that it actually did so except in the sense of it taking on a different tempo or form, is not explained.

The files on the Checkmate Operations were destroyed in 1974 and 1975 and over a period April to June of 1977, that is, shortly after the notorious Operation Ham and Operation Oddjob became public knowledge and RCMP "wrongdoings" became a matter of wide public concern.

Since the entire documentary evidence of this intensive nationwide operation has been reduced to what was referred to as Exhibit MC–78 the sessions were to a considerable degree dependent on the memories of the RCMP officers who were responsible for or who carried out the "dirty tricks". None of the victims, designated as "targets", were called or allowed to appear before this secret hearing and insofar as RCMP testimony was questioned or challenged it was entirely dependent on the ability and the desire of the lawyers representing the RCMP and the Commission itself.

When asked if 14 cases were all that took place Officer Yaworski stated that he recalls 14 but they were really only illustrative — not all of the "dirty tricks". "There were others," he said, "but I can't recall them." The criteria used for selecting just these 14 from all of the other RCMP cases was not revealed.

Only three persons and two organizations are named in the heavily censored record — all but one appearing in Case 13. It is possible that this case was instrumental in the RCMP's even admitting the existence of the entire Operation Checkmate, for Case 13 deals with the information that became public knowledge when the RCMP admitted forging and distributing letters that were brought to the attention of the Krever Commission on the Security of Ontario Health Records. The forged letters involved three activists of the now defunct League for Socialist Action, one of them, its leading spokesman, Ross Dowson, whose widely known slander suit against the RCMP has won the support of leading trade unionists, socialists and civil libertarians both in Canada and internationally. The other named organization is the Communist Party in Case 2.

While the LSA and the CP are named it would appear obvious from the available evidence that Checkmate was directed against many prominent individuals and took into its target-area the NDP, its left wing Waffle, Maoist organizations and other organizations, including cultural and religious organizations that are sometimes designated by witch hunters as peripheral to the Left and "fronts".

Case 1 was directed against a person who was a member of an unnamed organization and a "very influential member" of an unnamed "front" in which a profound dispute was taking place, neither of which "was going to erupt into violence." It involves the RCMP's manipulation of the mass media.

Case 2 where the Communist Party is actually named — about which there is "no suspicion that this party is going to erupt into violence." It involves a foreign-born person, employed by a significant but unnamed firm and a member of an unnamed party, knowledge of which it is admitted would normally compromise his obtaining the Canadian citizenship he is seeking. The following synopsis by a McDonald Commission lawyer was agreed to by a top RCMP officer: "So, the operation was that the Security Service would not place on record the security objection it would normally have raised with the Citizenship people, so that he would obtain his citizenship rather speedily; as he had not in the past; and this would raise in his confreres' minds some concern as to why he had this time obtained his citizenship."

The rapid granting of his citizenship was designed to compromise him in the eyes of his co-thinkers, and at the same time make it possible to recruit him as an RCMP informer on an unnamed foreign government.

While Cases 1 and 2 may possibly involve RCMP interference in the internal affairs of the CP and the personal lives of members of this completely legal political party, Case 4 and possibly Case 3 may involve RCMP intervention in the NDP and/or the trade union movement.

Case 3 involves a man who the RCMP considers to be a prominent and influential politician which probably places him in the membership of the NDP, possibly the Liberals or even the Tories. But the RCMP alleges that this unnamed person had been and still is a secret member of an unnamed organization. The operation mounted with the sole purpose of informing unnamed persons or organizations of this allegation was not effective. Officer Yaworski testified that "the news did not come as a surprise" to the persons the RCMP informed. The RCMP further intervened to stop the unnamed politician from winning a post on an important government committee that concerned them — although they admitted that their red-baiting had nothing to do with the possibility of "sensitive" information coming before that committee, that is, endangered "national security."

Case 4 involves a letter forged by the RCMP over a forged signature of a person on a leading body of an unnamed organization. This forgery was circulated at an event of some importance to whip up fear that a leading person was also a member of another unnamed organization. This resulted in sufficient pressure to force the resignation of the unnamed person from the leading body of the unnamed organization. There is evidence to believe that this refers to a forged communication circulated at a mass rally of NDPers, most of them supporters of its Waffle left-wing, and involving a prominent person on its leading body.

Case 5 involves a person of international reputation, head of an unnamed business or institution, possibly even a charitable organization or religious formation perhaps involved in supporting the African anti-apartheid struggle, with considerable funds at its disposal and with "contacts all over the world." According to RCMPer Chisholm, "the economics of how this organization was running was our major concern."

The RCMP decided to forge an income tax return, forge the target's name to it and file it in anticipation that the Department of Revenue would see cause to investigate it and "hopefully also lead to a prosecution against" this unnamed person. "In this prosecution," testified RCMPer Yaworski, "I had rather hoped that we would obtain a clearer insight into the source of his revenues."

The RCMP had a source (spy) with sufficient connections to be confident that no income tax form had already been filed and with sufficient access to information to draw up what would appear to be a valid

but nonetheless faulty return to the Department of Revenue. The source was able to inform the RCMP that the Department of National Revenue actually did contact the no-doubt astonished and troubled unnamed person, but took no legal action. Yaworski volunteered that the RCMP investigation of the unnamed person continues to this day.

Case 6 involved a complicated action where the RCMP (Yaworski himself) forged a letter containing a summary of recent activities of an unnamed person (1) which it addressed to another unnamed person (2) presumably staying at a hotel. An RCMPer falsely registered at the hotel as (2) in order to pick up the RCMP's own forged letter, which along with a covering letter forged in (2)'s name, he sent along to a publication thought to be interested in its contents in the hope that it would publish it. It did not do so.

Cases 7 and 8 have been withheld without explanation. Case 9 involves the RCMP's intimidation of the custodians of an unnamed, possibly a lodge, church or trade union hall, in order to deprive a targeted group of renting it and using it for a study group by alleging, via arranged telephone calls to those in charge, that the group's "aims included use of violence to achieve its political aims." When the RCMP was contacted and formally queried by the hall's custodians, the RCMP sent around an officer to assure them that the allegations, which they themselves had planted, were true.

Case 10 involves the pollution of the gas tank and demobilization of a car owned by a targetted person so that he and an important visitor would be forced to use the car of an informant that had been already bugged.

Case 11, involving RCMP intimidation of an unnamed person, was so crude as to cause Commissioner McDonald himself to protest that the RCMP had actually "exiled" the unnamed person from the country. The RCMP had an agent make a series of phone calls to Y that a former ally of his in an unnamed organization, X, was threatening his life. The RCMP subsequently approached Y, affirming the danger of X's threats, which they themselves fabricated, and offering and actually giving him an airline ticket back to his country of origin. "Y" accepted the ticket and fled from Canada.

Case 12 involves the interception by the RCMP, through information obtained by an agent, that mail for a targetted organization was being held at a bus depot. An RCMPer misrepresenting himself, claimed the correspondence which, when it was found to be of no use to the RCMP, was destroyed.

Case 13 involves the RCMP's forging of letters and their circulation at a youth convention of the now defunct League for Socialist Action. While obviously based on the record of the Ontario Royal Commission, the RCMP testimony at the McDonald Commission repeats the slanders that Dowson rebutted before Justice Krever that the organization and those associated with it had been and he, as its leading spokesman was, and along with those associated with him today, is "violence prone" and "subversive." Incidentally, an admission was also made of something not heretofore known — that the French letters circulated in Montreal and Toronto were also forged by the RCMP and that Officer Yaworski himself had a major hand in the forging of the English letters.

This scandalous campaign of RCMP "dirty tricks," justified by "dangerous thoughts" allegedly held by its victims, could only sweep up an ever-widening number into its range, and thereby tend to create a total climate of repression in the country. The fact that the objective situation at the time gave little to sustain it (the Watergate exposures were at their peak) blocked the logic of this development.

Nonetheless dozens of legitimate organizations, a wide number of their supporters and an incalculable number of others suffered from these violations of civil rights. Such violations require a complete exposure, and appropriate action to deter repetition, above all when its perpetrators are the very forces who the state has given the function to, as the RCMP's motto reads, "Uphold the Right."

The RCMP's violations of the law in the course of Operation Checkmate involve among others: conspiracy to violate the rights of Canadians as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, fraud, private and public mischief, communicating false messages, criminal slander, attempted assault, threatening bodily harm, etc, etc.

The individual violators should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. But the process cannot stop there. Those who gave direction and who promoted and condoned such crimes right up to the highest level of governmental and state power should not be allowed to scape-goat others, but must themselves be placed in the dock before public opinion! from Forward, July, 1980

* * *

The awful menace of "Dirty Tricks"

by Ross Dowson

With the McDonald Commission's release of four volumes of heavily censored testimony on the long suppressed RCMP Operation Checkmate late in April, the continuing exposures of the RCMP's violations of Canadians' civil rights revealed an even more sinister visage than ever before. What have become known as "dirty tricks" were nothing more nor less than a highly organized campaign, backed by the full resources of the state, to harass, disrupt, and if possible to destroy a number of completely legitimate organizations innocent of violating even the slightest law or regulation governing this country.

Since no legal ground whatsoever for this calculated assault on the civil rights of the targetted organizations and persons associated in any way with them could be established, those who inspired Checkmate and who saw to it that it was carried out were compelled to resort to the infamous fascistic concept that, no matter their declared views and no matter their real actions, the "targets" were guilty of "dangerous thoughts", held "in secret" but known to those in authority .

With Operation Ham, unraveled after an inadvertent revelation by a junior officer, you might have thought the scandals had peaked. Ham involved an illegal break-in, the entry and the theft of a computerized membership list of the completely legal political party now in government in Quebec, the Parti Québécois, after five months of meticulous planning involving hundreds of constables and support forces carried off without the slightest knowledge of either the custodians or the owners of the tapes.

But then just a few months back there was the testimony of a former RCMP agent before the Keable Commission. At any time they might have chose to do so, the RCMP could have arrested the entire membership of the terrorist FLQ, about 30 to 35 members, through their own agents who actually set up and who actually controlled FLQ cells. The RCMP purposely took no action against one person who she swore was an actual participant in the kidnapping of British Trade Minister Cross. Ottawa used this situation to declare that the country was faced with an impending insurrection which required the imposition from coast to coast of the totalitarian War Measures Act. With that you might have concluded that revelations of RCMP infamy could only go down — from here on in.

But now we know through the McDonald Commission's release of this testimony from the top RCMP officers who planned and who saw to the implementation of Operation Checkmate what some had all along suspected to be an indisputable fact — that the RCMP carried out a series of actions, spanning a period from 1969 to December 1973, against a wide range of individuals, groups and political parties, designed to intimidate them, disrupt them and if possible to destroy them.

Whatever the impact this sinister RCMP campaign had on its "targets" and the health of democratic rights in Canada, the release of this testimony and testimony supplementing it found a victim — a few days later in the suicide of a 30-year veteran and senior RCMP officer directly in charge of undercover sources in the mid-1970's — Inspector James Worrell. It has also resulted in widespread demoralization within the Security Service itself.

The aim of the operations, in the minds of those assigned to carry them out was noted in a memo of late 1970. It was from an unnamed member of a triumvirate headed by Superintendent S. Chisholm who was in charge of Operation Checkmate, in reference to a discussion that the former had just had with RCMP Director-General John Starnes. Its opening words read: "With the DG's wish in mind that this organization should be destroyed"

The word "destroyed" was clarified in the testimony taken from Starnes himself by reference to a note he had sent somewhat earlier to a fellow officer... "with a view to neutralizing and isolating them and where appropriate destroying them".

What and who were the targets of the RCMP's isolate and destroy mission?

It is clear from the testimony, beyond even a shadow of doubt that these operations were not of an investigative nature against persons or organizations which might have been perceived as threats to "peace and order." They were not even as the RCMP hierarchy alleged them to be "countering actions" to the efforts of "subversives", who are defined in the Criminal Code as "advocates of force as a means of governmental change." And they were not directed against spies and agents of "foreign powers" compromising or threatening Canada's "national security."

The targetted individuals and groups were not guilty of any overt acts of an illegal character. This simple fact was a real and troublesome problem for the RCMP, for if they were even thought on serious grounds to be guilty, charges could have been levelled against them and if found so, they could have been punished by law. Top RCMP officers such as Assistant Commissioner S. Chisholm who had been in overall charge of Checkmate testified that the law was "inadequate". Of course none admitted to breaking the law: it had been necessary, as he expressed it, to "develop novel means". John Starnes who had been the director general of Security Service saw "an inherent contradiction" between RCMP responsibilities to be discharged, and staying inside the law. Of course when in the unfolding of the testimony it became quite obvious that they actually had done so, the RCMP never admitted to breaking the law. As Superintendent Yaworski, officer in charge of staffing and the Personnel Branch of the Security Service phrased it, the RCMP acted not illegally but "wrong".

The formal aim of Operation Checkmate as declared by Commissioner Chisholm at the opening sessions were disruptive measures against "subversive" groups, aimed at the organizations to create confusion in their ranks, discredit their leadership and/or their programs, all with the purpose of turning their energies inward as much as possible, rather than outward to the community.

But as the hearings proceeded and the targets were revealed the term "subversive" became less and less used to describe them. At one point Starnes said "this happens to be in the field of dealing with organizations which were for want of a better word — subversive." Elsewhere he described Checkmate Operations as coming into play "where it was clearly seen that the purpose of an organization or individuals were at cross purposes with the maintenance of domestic stability, they should be neutralized."

While the immediate targets of Operation Checkmate remain unnamed except for two cases, it is apparent even from the heavily censored testimony that they had one general characteristic — a common ideology.

While it had broader purposes, Operation Checkmate was directed against Marxism, against individuals, groups and organizations which actually declare themselves to be adherents of that theory and body of ideas, and others who with little or even no grounds could be labelled Marxists or any brand of Marxist — "quasi", "crypto" or "closet".

The RCMP has been acting as if the infamous Section 98, inserted in the Criminal Code to imprison the leaders of the Winnipeg General Strike and later top figures of the early Communist Party, had never been repealed.

The RCMP is not interested in the activities of its relatively small and isolated targets, where it could find nothing illegal. In their testimony before the commission the RCMP brass even conceded that the adherents of this ideology are not "agents of a foreign power". And they soon dropped all pretence that they constituted a danger to "national security." They were targetted in order to lay the grounds for taking on bigger targets.

By targetting groups on the basis of their ideology the RCMP could carry out its search, harass, and if possible, destroy mission on the grounds of what it alleges are the implications of their ideology — on the grounds of the dangerous thoughts of its adherents.

The simple outlawing of a body of ideas makes it relatively easy to justify the violation of the integrity of the anti-status quo mass movements such as the PQ, the organized labor movement, and the NDP that is based on it. The RCMP does not dare, at this time, to challenge the legitimacy of either the PQ or the NDP as political parties. In violation of these parties' own constitutional requirements of membership, the RCMP has assumed the authority to intervene and declare that some members of the NDP — the Waffle possibly, and certainly Trotskyists, and those it labels ex-Communists — are not legitimate members of the NDP, but "infiltrators".

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labor in its brief to the McDonald Commission declared that the trade union movement has been "implicitly branded" by the RCMP Security Forces "as subversive... It is clear to us, as a result of our direct experience," notes the brief, that the role of the Security system "is to protect the security of the status quo" and to "protect the present configuration of that (political) system." How else can one understand the RCMP building files on leading Toronto trade unionist Mike Lyons and others as reported elsewhere on this page.

The slander suit being conducted in my personal name against the RCMP is to help end the shameful situation where the federal police, under the direction and prompting of the government, can brand individuals and organizations at will as subversive, and act against them to deprive them and by implication the Canadian people as a whole, of their civil rights and the possibility of making social changes as in their democratic wisdom they see fit to do. from Forward, July, 1980.

CLC condemns RCMP-Labor ties

A forthright position on what organized labor's relations to the RCMP should be was taken by the 2,736 delegates to Labor's parliament, the 13th constitutional convention of the Canadian Labour Congress held in Winnipeg this spring.

One resolution called on the federal government "to order the RCMP to end its surveillance of the labour movement and put an end to its so-called security work." It also condemned "all collaboration with the RCMP" by organized labor.

The main argument of the resolution was addressed to the scandal of certain union leaders having secret, on-going relations with the RCMP. Concrete evidence of what was long known to be a fact, had surfaced

earlier in the pages of This Magazine, Nov-Dec 1979, in the form of correspondence between John Fryer, the secretary of the B.C. Government Employees Union, and a vice-president of the CLC, and leaders of the Canadian Union of Public Employees — Lofty MacMillan, director of organization, and President Grace Hartman. Fryer protested that he would not "condone or participate in that kind of activity" and when accused of doing so he noted that he had informed the CUPE leaders of the names of those who are or were the real participants in an "RCMP Labour Committee."

In an open letter dated November 23, 1979, Ross Dowson, who is waging a half-million dollar slander suit against the RCMP, brought this information to the attention of the officers of the Canadian labour movement. He urged them to immediately act to clear up this matter which compromises the integrity of the entire labour movement. He urged the designation of a "Committee of unionists of irreproachable integrity, with the named persons being given an opportunity to explain or clear themselves, and a recommended course of action to be implemented by the union bodies to which they are responsible."

The CLC Resolution reads as follows

Whereas the basic aims of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police run counter to the interests of the trade unions;

Whereas recent forays by the RCMP into bodies like the liaison committee between the police and the unions in British Columbia make it easier for the RCMP to collect data on the labor movement;

Whereas in collecting this information the RCMP directly infringes on the rights of all unionists;

Therefore be it resolved that the congress condemn all collaboration with the RCMP;

And be it further resolved that the Canadian Labour Congress calls on the government to order the RCMP to end its surveillance of the labor movement and put an end to its so-called security work, which consists of spying on the activities of the unions and their members.

Another resolution adopted by the delegates recommended the establishment of an all-party committee of MPs "to review and oversee the RCMP activities. " from Forward, Nov./ 1980

Lawmen clear RCMP criminals
by Ross Dowson

Ontario Attorney-general Roy McMurtry has used his authority to block the first and only attempt, so far, to lay charges against the RCMP for violating the law in the course of its infamous "thought control" "Operation Checkmate." When the October 30 hearing before Toronto Justice of Peace Allen convened, after four previous delays granted on his department's request, McMurtry ended the charade by formally ordering a stay of proceedings.

With Judge Allen's compliance to this diktat, civil rights lawyers Kopyto and Copeland announced an appeal to the Supreme Court of Ontario slated for November 26.

The initiative to lay charges against the RCMP was taken this April after over a year's failure on the part of the Ontario attorney-general's office, which is responsible for the enforcement of the Criminal Code, to act on the RCMP's admission before the Krever Commission to having broken the law. Senior RCMP officials confessed there to the federal police having forged and circulated letters which Dowson had brought to the attention of the Commission.

Civil rights lawyer Paul Copeland challenged McMurtry's subsequent delaying interventions at Judge Allen's hearings, before even a prosecution could get under way, as violating the rights of citizens to initiate a criminal charge. Now, McMurtry's stay of proceedings, thought to be without precedent, compromises the entire concept of private citizen's rights before the courts.

While McMurtry's stay first and foremost takes the heat off the RCMP for its violations of the law, it has many other far-reaching implications. One part of the 22-page directive, while not challenging that the two named RCMPers were senior officers, notes that they were acting on orders from even more senior officers: "... with respect to those who were senior or superior to the named potential accused, their involvement and the fact that they will not be prosecuted," the order reads, "is a factor which mitigates against prosecuting the named potential accused."

Kopyto told the press that he believed this to be the most insidious part of McMurtry's move. "What he has done with this is throw out the whole Nuremberg decision." Nazis accused of war crimes before Allied judges at Nuremberg were not allowed to clear themselves of responsibility because they had "only followed orders," from a higher level, as did Eichmann with his claim that he had only supplied the wagons that delivered Hitler's victims to the incinerators.

Thus the attorney-general's stay of proceedings clears the way for continuing RCMP illegalities at the very same time as the McDonald Commission, early this fall, expressed concern that the RCMP may still be illegally getting confidential personal information from unemployment insurance files. According to a brief prepared for the commission, the flow of information to the RCMP and possibly other police forces has "remained essentially unchanged."

McMurtry excused his department's failure to act and his barring of others from acting as even being in the interests of those seeking to lay charges, because the accused, notwithstanding the facts, may be acquitted and a precedent set. At the same time he indulged in the old buck-passing game employed by various levels of the state machinery. He scores the federal government for closing its eyes to obvious breaking of the law, for its failure despite many expressions of intent, to solve the so-called inherent contradiction between the alleged upholding of the law by apparent commissions of crimes. He scored RCMP officials, who were not even in jeopardy, for refusing to cooperate with OPP investigations. He accused Ottawa of continuing to withhold information despite assurances from Solicitor-general Kaplan that they had received all evidence.

His brief specifically noted the McDonald Commission's release, on just the previous day, of four volumes of testimony on what happened to Operation Checkmate files. In the released material RCMP Superintendent Yaworski is quoted as describing the material in them as "very explosive" and "potentially damaging," declaring that his "first reaction was to destroy the whole of the files." The Checkmate files were incinerated on June 10, 1977 just 18 days before the RCMP placed a moratorium on their destruction pending the appointment of the McDonald Commission.

This latest blockage only proves the crucial importance of building a powerful basis of support behind Dowson's slander suit as it moves onto the next stage.

from Forward, Nov./ 1980

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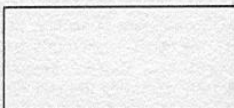
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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We wish to indicate our support as concerned civil libertarians for the suit initiated by Mr. Ross Dowson, against the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. We understand that the purpose of this suit is to establish the legitimacy and legality of socialist thought in face of charges of "subversion" by the RCMP.

We believe that individuals have the right to express their views free of unwarranted and unsubstantiated allegations of subversion.

We believe that the charge of subversion has been used and is being used to justify intervention in the internal affairs and the harassment of such legal organizations as the New Democratic Party and the organized labor movement and we further believe that such activities threaten to whittle away at the democratic right to dissent in Canada.

Though we may not necessarily agree with the political views of Mr. Dowson, we do believe that the real test of a democracy is its ability to tolerate and respect individuals whose views may not coincide with those of the majority at any given time.

We are ticking off the appropriate box(es).

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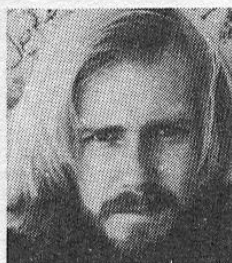
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Joe Rosenblatt



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